Sing Along With Nodwick in a Classic D&D® Adventure

262

Dragon®

MAGAZINE

Half-Pint Heroes

5 New Races You Can Try on for Size

Dungeons to Drivespace

The Secrets of Spider-Man's Alien Costume

$4.95 USA £3.50 UK

$4.95US $6.50CAN

08

0 09281 01823 0

The Greeks

AD&D® Forgotten Realms®
Sea of Fallen Stars
Steven E. Schend
Accessory

Take the plunge and send your campaign into the *Sea of Fallen Stars*. This accessory details the cultures and societies that flourish undersea and also offers players new aquatic races. Plus, it contains rules for taking land-based campaigns beneath the waves. Descend into the depths. And feel the pressure rise.

AD&D Forgotten Realms®
***Forgotten Realms Interactive Atlas* CD-ROM**
Electronic Accessory

This complete interactive atlas depicts the entire planet of Abeir-Toril. Includes all overland, city, and dungeon maps of the Realms and many new maps that have never been seen before. All maps are available to view and print and are fully compatible with *AD&D Core Rules CD-ROM 2.0* and *Campaign Cartographer 2*.

AD&D
AD&D Core Rules 2.0 Expansion CD-ROM
Electronic Accessory

We've perfected all the elements of the original *Core Rules* CD-ROM and added even more features. Players and DMs now have access to all nine core rulebooks and eleven AD&D Complete Handbooks. Players can customize their classes. DM's have access to multiple-NPC creation aids, 150 character kits, a new building interiors set, and more. Requires original *Core Rules CD-ROM 2.0*.

IN STORES NOW!

TSR, AD&D, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons and Forgotten Realms are registered trademarks of TSR, Inc. a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Crash SpartaCon
NES GAMERS
Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons
TIME TO PLAY.
Questions? Call (800) 324-6496 or visit our website at <www.tsr.com>.
SILVER
TSR
ANNIVERSARY
We know the Greeks crashed Troy first. This happened later. Think about it.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

Dragon®

Issue # 262 Volume XXIV, No. 3 August 1999

FEATURES

Half-Pint Heroes
James Wyatt
They might be small, but don't underestimate them.
28

Elmshire
Roger E. Moore
A halfling haven for any AD&D® campaign.
36

By Any Other Name: Gnomes & Halflings
Owen K.C. Stephens
A short list of names for your height-challenged heroes.
44

(They Might Be) Against The Giants
Aaron Williams
Nodwick and company embark on this classic quest.
90

FICTION

To Dam It Where It Trickles
Pete D. Manison
Vestian's finest pupil has been too curious lately.
48

ARES

From Dungeons to Drivespace
James Wyatt
Populate the galaxy with dungeon denizens.
92

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™

The Alien Costume
Jeff "Zippy" Quick
Sometimes, the clothes hate the man.
103

DEPARTMENTS

56 Dragon Ecologies
Johnathan M. Richards The monster hunters learn about "The Ecology of the Jermlaine" the hard way.

62 Bazaar of the Bizarre
Nathan Irving & Andrew Turpin Magical items of the wee folk might be overlooked, but they can have a big impact on your game.

70 Rogues Gallery
Philip Athans
From the pages of the *Baldur's Gate* novel come four new legends of the Realms.

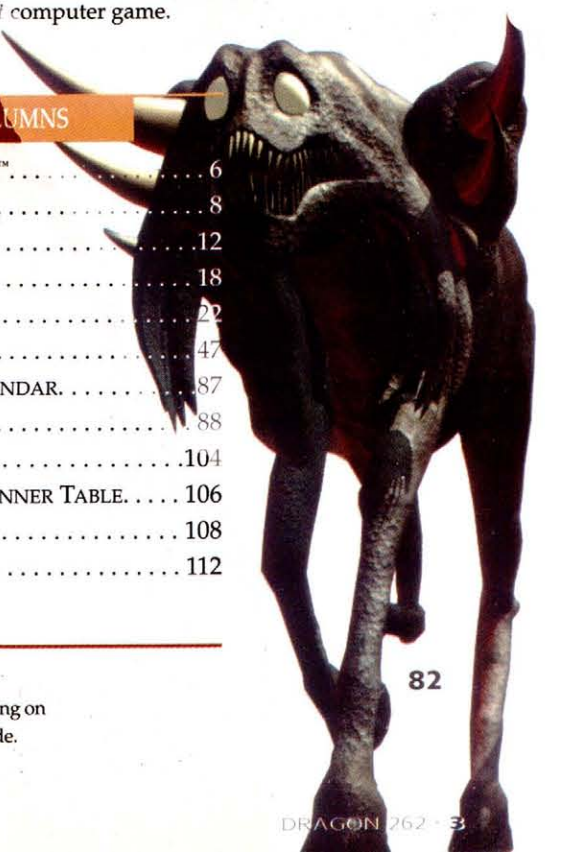
76 Arcane Lore
Johnathan M. Richards
Don't you *hate* it when your spellbook gets roasted?

82 Dragon's Bestiary
Chris Avellone
Strange new creatures from the world of Interplay's new *PLANESCAPE®: Torment* computer game.

SEEING AS THESE ARE GIANTS, THEIR LOOT IS LIKELY TO COME IN ULTRA-HERNIA SIZE, SO IF YOU GUYS COULD CUT DOWN ON THE DENSER ITEMS--
TRY LIFTING WITH YOUR KNEES.
90

COLUMNS

THE WYRM'S TURN™ 6
D-MAIL™ 8
FORUM 12
DUNGEONCRAFT 18
SAGE ADVICE 22
PC PORTRAITS 47
CONVENTION CALENDAR 87
ROLE MODELS 88
DRAGONMIRTH™ 104
KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE 106
TSR™ PREVIEWS 108
PROFILES 112



ON THE COVER

Illustrator Tony DiTerlizzi is no stranger to these pages, or to our cover. (This is his third.) Starting on page 94, Tony shows us what might happen when fantasy and science-fiction worlds collide.

Uniquely immersive role-playing experience is limited only by your imagination.

Collect over 150 creatures including rare and ultra-rare breeds. Then custom combine them into millions of powerful new monsters.

Strategically use your monster's dominance of one of the four elements: Earth, Wind, Fire or Water.

INFINITE MONSTERS

Pit your creation against a friend in the arena mode.

Welcome to the world of Jade Cocoon: Story of the Tamamayu. As Levant, a Cocoon Master, you will engage powerful monsters in deadly one on one combat. As the magic and talon clash of these titanic battles turn to your favor you can call on the mystic Cocoon powers and capture a fallen foe as they are on the brink of death. Once captured these mighty creatures can be trained to fight for you and combined with other monsters to form millions of new beasts. Once created these creatures will be your key to surviving the perils of the forest.

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

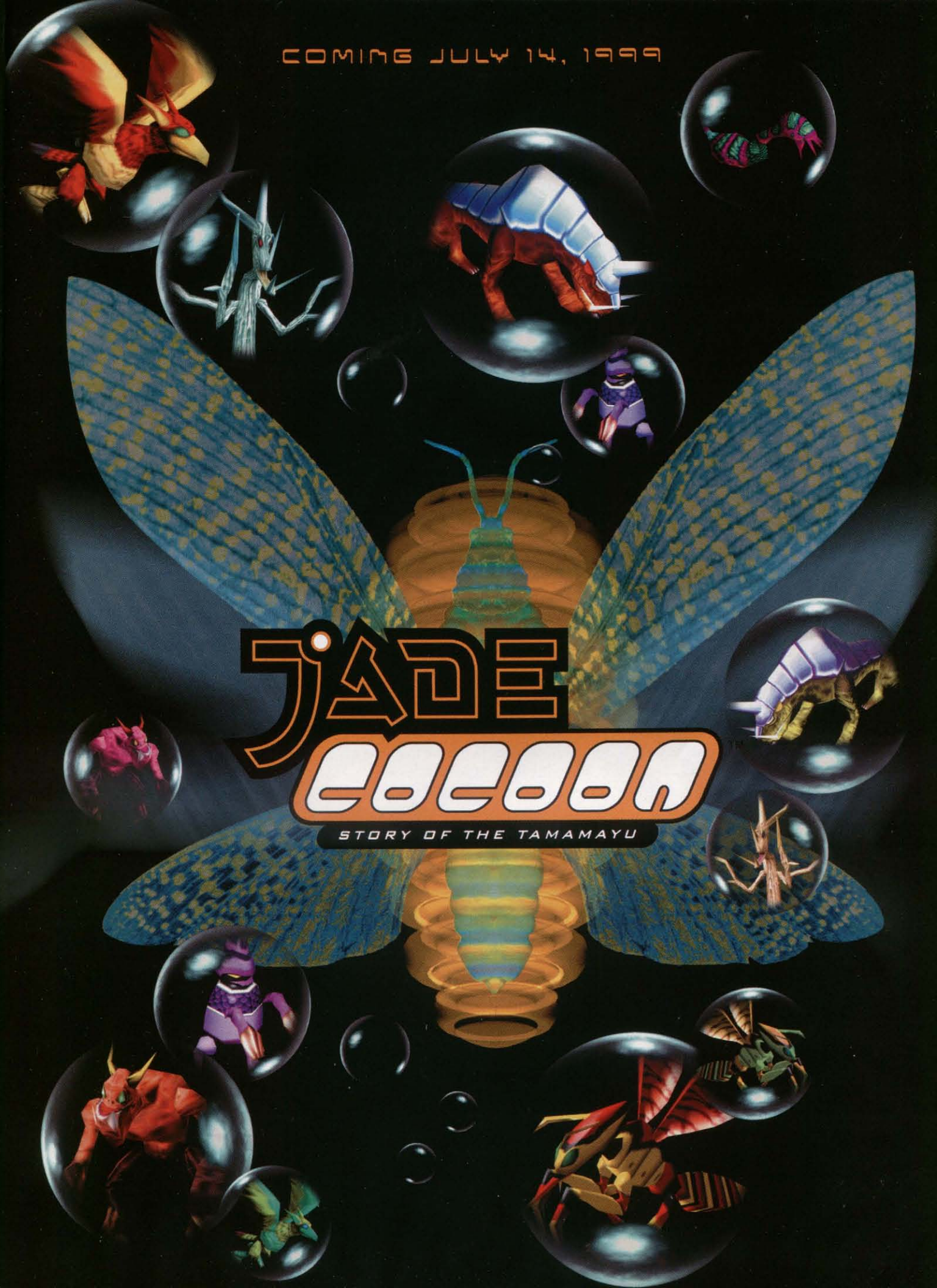
PlayStation

CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT

Genki

LEARN THE SECRETS OF THE TAMAMAYU. VISIT WWW.CRAVEGAMES.COM

Jade Cocoon: Story of the Tamamayu, Crave and their respective logos are trademarks of Crave Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Crave Entertainment is a registered trademark in the U.S.
© 1999 Crave Entertainment, Inc. Genki is a registered trademark of Genki Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.


COMING JULY 14, 1999
JADE
COCOON
STORY OF THE TAMAMAYU

The Wyrm's Turn™

Cliché's the Thing

HOW MANY TIMES have you heard that the key to running a good AD&D® game is to avoid clichés? That originality is the essential element of creativity?

Nonsense.

Years ago, one of my fellow students was having trouble with Shakespeare. She read the plays diligently, but she didn't appreciate them. She frowned into her book each class, frustrated and rarely contributing to the discussion. One night, as we were discussing *Hamlet*, she finally cracked.

"I don't see what's so great about this soliloquy," she snapped. "It's nothing but a bunch of clichés strung together!"

The rest of us stared slack-jawed until the professor mastered his surprise and patiently explained that they had later become clichés only because they are so often quoted. Today, Shakespeare is probably the most often-quoted literary source after the Bible.

What's wrong with clichés? Not a thing.

Clichés serve the same purpose as the icons on your computer. They're easy to recognize and understand. They make learning new systems easier, and the best ones even come to define the things they represent.

The AD&D game is full of glorious clichés: the faultless paladin, the crafty wizard, the wicked necromancer, and—of course, dungeons and dragons. First-time players often latch on to a familiar cliché to buoy them through the unfamiliar waters of roleplaying. Even people who've never played the AD&D game can understand your tales of gathering a fellowship of heroes to enter a dark tower and defeat its evil master.

Of course, if that's all you ever did, your game would grow old fast. Clichés have a bad rap because we get lazy with them, never transforming them into believable characters, settings, and events. The name doesn't help, either. Think of them as "archetypes" if that helps.

Clichés are a beginning, not an end. They come to us unbidden, since we've seen them so many times before. The trick is, when you think of a cliché while dreaming up your next adventure, give it a little twist.

The simplest way to twist a cliché is to reverse it. Send the heroes off to rescue a kidnapped prince. Make their orcish nemesis a scholarly pacifist. Decide that the lich has clung to life to make amends for an evil past.

You can disguise a cliché even further with the slightest effort. Turn a pair of star-crossed lovers into rival clerics of different gods. Create a forest kingdom of elves and dwarves who've lived in symbiotic harmony for centuries. Put the characters on the wrong side of a just rebellion.

Eventually, you'll go so far that you can't even remember the cliché that inspired you.

Tell us about some of the clichés you've turned upside down in your own campaign, and watch for the best ones to appear in "DMail."

Dragon® MAGAZINE

Publisher
Wendy Noritake

Executive Editor
Pierce Watters

Editor
Dave Gross

Art Director
Larry Smith

Associate Editor
Chris Perkins

Assistant Editor
Jesse Decker

Designers
Scott Ricker
Peter Whitley

Editorial Assistant
Chris Carlson

Production Manager
John Dunn

Advertising Sales Manager
Bob Henning

Advertising Traffic Coordinator
Bobbi Maas

Circulation Assistant
Rebecca Heft

Dragon® Magazine (ISSN 0279-6848) is published monthly except November (twice monthly) by TSR, Inc., 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, United States of America. Periodical-class postage paid at Renton, WA, U.S.A., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Dragon Magazine*, P.O. Box 469107, Escondido, CA 92046, U.S.A. USPS 318-790, ISSN 0279-6848.The postal address for all materials from the United States of America and Canada except subscription orders and change-of-address notices is: *Dragon Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, U.S.A.

DISTRIBUTION: *Dragon Magazine* is available from game and hobby shops throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and through a limited number of other overseas outlets. Newsstand distribution throughout the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom is by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646-3048; telephone; (201) 634-7400.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Subscription rates via periodical-class mail are as follows: $34.95 in U.S. funds for 12 issues sent to an address in the U.S.; $52.95 in U.S. funds for 12 issues sent to an address in Canada; £34.95 for 12 issues sent to an address within the United Kingdom; £41.95 for 13 issues sent to an address in the UK; $57.95 in U.S. funds for 12 issues sent by surface mail to any other address. Payment in full must accompany all subscription orders. Methods of payment include checks or money orders made payable to Dragon Magazine, or charges to valid MasterCard or VISA credit cards; send subscription orders with payments to *Dragon Magazine*, P.O. Box 469107, Escondido, CA 92046, USA; email dragon@pcspublink.com; phone **1-800-395-7760**. In the United Kingdom, methods of payment include cheques or money orders made payable to TSR Ltd., or charges to a valid ACCESS or VISA credit card; send subscription orders with payments to TSR Ltd., as per that address above. Prices are subject to change without prior notice. The issue expiration of each subscription is printed on the mailing label of each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscription copies must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change in order to assure uninterrupted delivery.

SUBMISSIONS: All material published in *Dragon Magazine* becomes the exclusive property of the publisher, unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication. We welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork; however, no responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. Any submission accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size will be returned if it cannot be published. We strongly recommend that prospective authors write for our writers' guidelines before sending an article to us. In the United States and Canada, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (9½" long preferred) to Writers' Guidelines, c/o *Dragon Magazine*, at the above address; include sufficient American postage or International Reply Coupons (IRC) with the return envelope.

ADVERTISING: For information on placing advertisements in *Dragon Magazine*, ask for our rate card. All ads are subject to approval by TSR, Inc. TSR reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason.

Contact: Bob Henning, Advertising Sales Manager, *Dragon Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, U.S.A., (425) 204-7262. In the northeast, contact: Sig or Scott Buchmayr, Buchmayr Associates, 137 Rowayton Avenue, Rowayton, CT 06853, (203) 855-8834.

Advertisers and/or agencies of advertisers agree to hold TSR, Inc. harmless from and against any loss or expense from any alleged wrongdoing that may arise out of the publication of such advertisements. TSR, Inc. has the right to reject or cancel any advertising contract for which the advertiser and/or agency of advertiser fails to comply with the business ethics set forth in such contract.

Dragon is a registered trademark of TSR, Inc. Registration applied for in the United Kingdom. All rights to the contents of this publication are reserved, and nothing may be reproduced from it in whole or in part without first obtaining permission in writing from the publisher. Material published in *Dragon Magazine* does not necessarily reflect the opinions of TSR, Inc. Therefore, TSR will not be held accountable for opinions or misinformation contained in such material.

® designates registered trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. ™ designates trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. Most other product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

* indicates a product produced by a company other than TSR, Inc. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. The use of the name of any product without mention of its trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

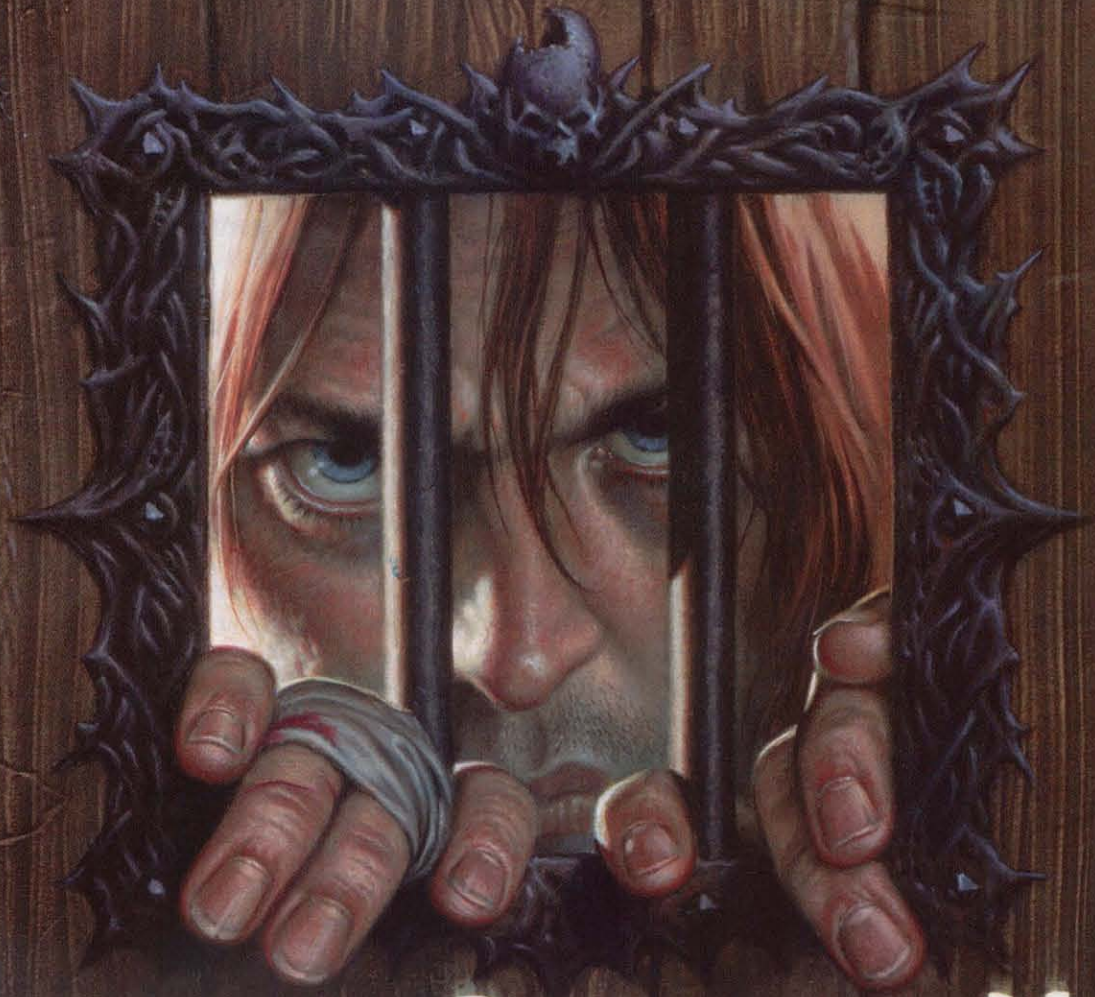
©1999 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved. All TSR characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Printed in the U.S.A.

FROM R. A. SALVATORE

New York Times Bestselling author

"Salvatore shows . . . intelligence in using the classic elements, a pleasant dry wit and a narrative gift." —*Publishers Weekly*



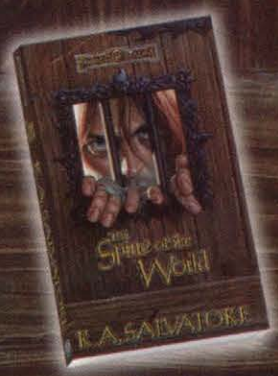
REDEMPTION BEGINS IN HELL

The once-noble barbarian Wulfgar has fallen into an abyss of his own creation. But the arrival of an old friend sets him upon a dangerous path to the windswept peaks of the Spine of the World. At the end of this road lies his most-prized possession—the life he thought lost forever.

Questions? (800) 324-6496
Or visit <www.tsr.com>

LUCKWOOD

The Spine of the World
R. A. Salvatore
Available September 1999



FORGOTTEN REALMS

D-Mail™

Keep in Touch!

To share your opinions on this issue of the magazine, post a letter to "D-Mail," *DRAGON® Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, USA. Send email to dmail@wizards.com. Include your ***full name and mailing address*** if you expect your letter to be printed, and let us know how much of that address you'd like printed. (We'll assume city and state otherwise.)

For subscription inquiries, send email to dragon@pcspublink, or call 1 (800) 395-7760.

Meta-Articles

I enjoy *DRAGON® Magazine*. In particular, I appreciate the meta-articles, those that are linked to other sources. Two excellent examples include Wolfgang Baur's "Ecology of the Ghoul" from issue #252, which was linked to "Kingdom of the Ghouls" in *DUNGEON® Adventures* #70, and Ed Greenwood's "Wyrms of the North" from issue #258, which was linked to the five-part Mere of Dead Men series in issues #69–73 of *DUNGEON Adventures*. Other notable examples are the many Rogues Gallery articles linked to featured short stories and novels.

Other than these meta-articles, my favorites are the "Dragon Ecologies." I love the extra knowledge and insight these articles give. They add life to otherwise stagnant statistics, are great stories, and make excellent handouts to players as research notes, miscellaneous treasure, and library findings. Of course, "Knights of the Dinner Table" and "Nodwick" are the first things I read.

Please continue publishing material that supports the GREYHAWK® and DRAGONLANCE® (with both SAGA® and traditional AD&D® statistics) campaigns as well as the *MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game*. In addition, I would like to see some "place anywhere" locations and articles describing thieves' guilds, temples, wizard's towers, magic shops, frontier keeps, or taverns.

Josephe Collins, Jr.
Milton, WI

We haven't received much feedback on the meta-articles, or crossover articles, as we call them, but so far the responses have all been positive. We do have plans for more such articles, but let us know whether you'd like to see them more often or just once in a while.

CD Characters

I started playing the D&D® game back in the early '80s when I was in the military. Back then, we had just the basics and usually adventured in the GREYHAWK setting, because one of our players had most of the modules that went with it. I have since gotten away from roleplaying but would like to get back.

The problem is finding the old modules and sourcebooks. Are there any plans to publish the various AD&D modules and settings on CD-ROM? There is nothing more discouraging than finding part one and part three but not part two, and since many of these are out of print, it is impossible to find them.

Are there any plans to publish the various AD&D modules and settings on CD-ROM?

One solution is to put the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* book, the annual updates, and perhaps a collection of the monsters from the pages of *DRAGON* Magazine on a CD. I would like to see the various books, modules, and magazines on a series of CDs. CDs take less space than books and are more convenient.

I also would like to see a CD designed to help DMs that includes encounter and combat charts from the numerous supplements. This way, instead of having to search the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, and other sources, the DM would have all the info in one place. Also, a CD with the out-of-print NPC classes such as the anti-paladin, witch, and duelist, along with the characters from "The Shady Dragon Inn" would be handy. It would be so nice as a DM to be able to have all the information in one or two CDs instead of numerous books.

While we're talking about computer accessories, I would like to see a program to resolve large-scale combat. It always seemed to me that six heroes facing one hundred kobolds would be at a disadvantage, instead of just wading through them with impunity. Unfortunately, the DMs must roll so may dice that they soon let the heroes kill everything and maybe suffer a little damage. The computer would make these combats faster and more fair.

Walter Zumbrennen
Dayton, OH

Electronic Publishing producer Anthony Valterra has this to say about upcoming CD-ROM projects:

The electronic publishing department of Wizards of the Coast is creating products to answer the needs of the modern roleplayer. We currently have—or will have by the end of 1999—products that cover most of the ideas Walter mentions.

***Core Rules 2.0** was released last year. It includes a program that creates player characters using Core or* PLAYERS OPTION®: Skills & Powers *rules, two mapmaking utilities, the ability to create custom monsters, races, items, spells, an NPC generator, nine fully searchable Core rule books (the* DUNGEON MASTER® Guide, Player's Handbook, MONSTROUS MANUAL *tome,* PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers,

PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic, PLAYER'S OPTION: Combat & Tactics, Arms and Equipment Guide, Tome of Magic, DM OPTION®: High-Level Campaigns*), and a dice rolling utility. With the expansion (to be released in the 3rd quarter),* Core Rules 2.0 *will support custom classes, contain additional mapping icons, have a group NPC generator, and let you export character sheets in RTF format. It will also contain eleven of the "Complete" handbooks* (Bards, Dwarves, Elves, Gnomes & Halflings, Druids, Fighters, Paladins, Priests, Rangers, Thieves, Wizards*) and all nine core books in HTML and RTF formats.*

The DRAGON Magazine *Archive* *(also 3rd quarter) contains issues #1–250 in PDF format on multiple CD-ROMS. We'll include a viewer that lets you do a word search across all CD-ROMS. These are the complete magazines, exactly as they appeared originally (including the much requested anti-paladin article).*

The FORGOTTEN REALMS Atlas *will be available late in the 3rd quarter. It contains around five hundred maps of the Realms, all interlinked using hot spots. These vector-based maps print beautifully at any size. If you own* Campaign Cartographer *or* Core Rules 2.0, *you can also edit these maps.*

While it's too soon to mention the year 2000 products, they should go a long way toward fulfilling Walter's wish list.

Technophile

Bruce Cordell's "Mage vs. Machine" in issue #258 was impressive and inspiring. It could not have come at a better time, as I am currently constructing a campaign where magic and technology mix.

It has long been my view that TSR should conceive a system of rules whereby technological items and characters might interface with the AD&D game. There have been several attempts at this in previous years, but these have always seemed obscure or whimsical (such as the tinker gnome class, whose abilities take too long to use when adventuring and provide comic relief rather than useful function). In a previous issue of *DRAGON Magazine* there was an article about converting statistics from the GAMMA WORLD® system for use with the AD&D game, but this is not widely available.

Matters are simplified through Bruce Cordell's article by the use of non-weapon proficiencies which cover characters working with technology. I eagerly await the publication of further material on the subject.

There were two small qualms I had with the article, however. The first of these is the implication that all sheens are autonomous robots that belong to cysts and seek mainly to overrun the natural world. It seemed that the possibility of sheens in other areas may have been overlooked. (Perhaps the PCs are the Sheen Masters trying to survive in a savage world of sorcery; or dwarves uncover an underground cavern filled with benign sheens maintaining strange, ancient devices.)

Also, sheen tools weren't addressed sufficiently in the first article. (Do all sheens use plasma for destructive purposes? What about lasers for delicate work or specialized sheens for transporting ore?)

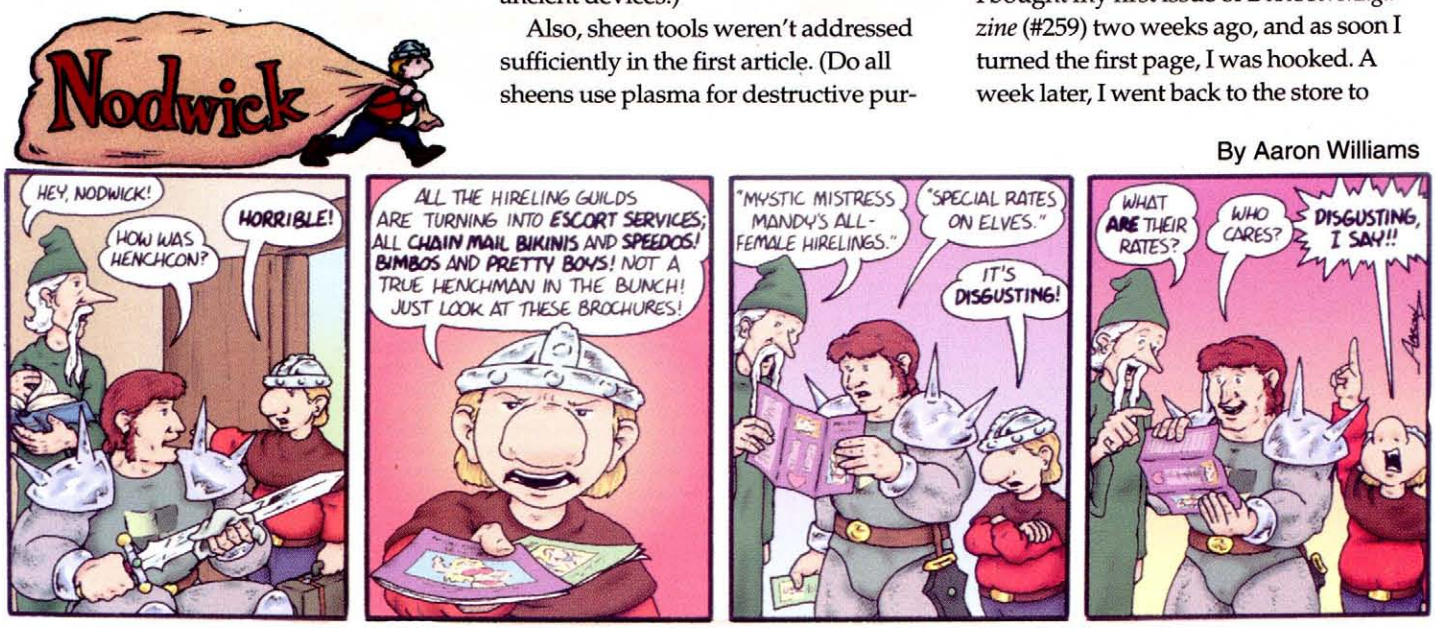
My second concern is that *DRAGON Magazine* seems to print much more material for wizards and less for other character classes. This article is no exception, as it assumes that wizards are the prime beneficiaries of this new-found branch of understanding. I would think that other classes, perhaps thieves (who deal already with traps, locks, and strange languages) or warriors (who might be sent out with a monarch to dispatch a cyst) might have kits dealing with technology. Certain races, such as dwarves and gnomes, tend to be mechanically inclined and might benefit from sheen artificing. None of these examples are mages, and each might arguably have a better understanding of technology than wizards.

I would enjoy seeing a technology-using character class (tinker, fixer, techsmith, engineer, or something similar) produced for the AD&D game. In lieu of such a development, the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* can be used to design such a class. (I recommend giving the character the more important proficiencies at the beginning of the game and allowing a +1 to each ability for each level). Alternatively, elements from the STAR*DRIVE® setting could be worked into the game.

Peter Kisner
Reading, PA

Hooked on Sheens

I bought my first issue of *DRAGON Magazine* (#259) two weeks ago, and as soon I turned the first page, I was hooked. A week later, I went back to the store to


Nodwick
By Aaron Williams
HEY, NODWICK!
HOW WAS HENCHCON?
HORRIBLE!
ALL THE HIRELING GUILDS ARE TURNING INTO ESCORT SERVICES; ALL CHAIN MAIL BIKINIS AND SPEEDOS! BIMBOS AND PRETTY BOYS! NOT A TRUE HENCHMAN IN THE BUNCH! JUST LOOK AT THESE BROCHURES!
"MYSTIC MISTRESS MANDY'S ALL-FEMALE HIRELINGS."
"SPECIAL RATES ON ELVES."
IT'S DISGUSTING!
WHAT ARE THEIR RATES?
WHO CARES?
DISGUSTING, I SAY!!

buy some earlier issues. I enjoyed the rogue *Skills & Powers* article (issue #256) and the one about villains (issue #259). "Dungeoncraft" is very useful to me as a beginning DM, and "DRAGONMIRTH™," "Knights of the Dinner Table," and the other comics are great. I also enjoyed "Wyrms of the North," but the article I most loved was Bruce Cordell's "Mage vs. Machine." It gave a lot of information, and the artwork was simply perfect. I incorporated it into my campaign immediately.

There is just one thing I regret: It was only about mages. Could you please ask Bruce Cordell to write another article? For example, a "Thief vs. Technology" or "Priest vs. Plasma" article would be useful. If you print one of them, I would be in heaven. Of course not for long, because I would have to go to school the next day.

Olaf Schoeman
Oud-Beijerland, The Netherlands

With your letter as leverage, Olaf, we just cornered Bruce Cordell with a request for "Revenge of the Sheens!" Look for a sequel article next year in these pages.

More on Symbiosis

I want to make a quick comment about Johnathan Richards' use of the word symbiote in "The Ecology of the Cyclopskin." Symbiotic relationships denote any form interspecies relation within an ecosystem. Such relationships take many forms: *predatory, genocidal* (for example, trees that exude toxins to prevent other plants from growing near them), *commensal* (a relationship in which both species may benefit, for example enteric bacteria which aid us in digestion—Richards confuses symbiotic with commensal in his article), and *parasitic* (in which one species benefits at another's expense), among others.

I bring this point up not merely because I geek out on semantics but also because a moment of consideration of the wide variety of symbiotic relationships can provide some grist for the DM's creative mill.

Alexis Dinno
New Haven, CT

Issue #259

I just wanted to say how great the recent issues of Dragon have been. I'm always excited when the new issue comes, and I find myself reading it from cover to cover. I especially enjoyed #259. A budding DM myself, it had a lot of useful stuff that I'd like to use in my own campaigns. "Dungeon Mastery" has been especially helpful, as well as Mark Hart's "Designer Demesnes" and Dawn Ibach's "Miscellaneous Mishaps."

I think the established game worlds like Toril and Krynn are great, but part of the fun of DMing is being able to create your own worlds to adventure in, and it's always good to get some advice from veteran roleplayers. I also want to thank Ed Greenwood for "Wyrms of the North." The article covered a lot more dragons than you would imagine hiding out in the North (though you have to admit the North is a pretty big place), but Mr. Greenwood helped show that dragons are more than two-dimensional monsters, and that they have as much of a variation of personalities as people do.

Nick Overfield
La Jolla, CA

YOU ARE ENTERING THE REALM OF:
Lord Thanatiok
MANAGEMENT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY INJURIES OR ACCIDENTS THAT OCCUR ON PREMISES

By Aaron Williams

VAMPIRE®
THE MASQUERADE
REDEMPTION™

"Best of E3"
– Adrenaline Vault, Game Spy, Gameprix.com

Live as a vampire, feeding on human prey while struggling to maintain your humanity.

"RPG of E3"
– E3.net

Build your own thrilling adventure with a unique storytelling system.

"RPG of Show"
– IGN.com, All Games Network, Voodoo Extreme

Survive a stunning 3-D world over 800 years– from medieval Prague to modern New York.

Coming this Winter

www.activision.com

ACTIVISION

Vampire: The Masquerade, White Wolf and World of Darkness are registered trademarks and Vampire: The Masquerade—Redemption is a trademark of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. © 1999 White Wolf Publishing, Inc. © 1999 Nihilistic Software, Inc. Published and distributed by Activision. Activision is a registered trademark of Activision, Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.

Forum

Question of the Month

Respond to the Question of the Month or any other roleplaying topic by mailing "Forum," DRAGON® Magazine, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, USA; dmail@wizards.com. Include your full name and mailing address; we won't print a letter sent anonymously. We'll withhold your name or print your full address if you wish.

What's the most remarkable die roll (or series of rolls) you've ever witnessed in a game?

On Location

In response to your request for descriptions of fantastic locations, here's a list of favorites from our latest campaign: Kodasia.

Coryvar Isle. Complete with a medusa, her pet basilisks, and a strange green minotaur-golem, this place was a real challenge for the 4th-level PCs who adventured there.

Arimov's Flying Citadel. We crashed it in the city harbor after escaping from its dungeon.

Tiriana's Palace in the City Cemetery. This was a vampire's fortress that was our group's undoing. (We were resurrected forty-seven years later, but that's beside the point. The place was a death trap!)

Daelavus's Tomb. The tomb of a famous elf-king who went to the Abyss for ten years and returned. We needed his spellbook, known for its anti-tanar'ri spells. His tomb was filled with traps—every time we turned around there was an anti-teleportation zone, and in the end, the rotten elf turned out to be a lich who had imprisoned himself to protect his subjects.

Armasatok's Lair. We finally found the balor himself in the Abyss and rescued the kidnapped victim. Of course, we nearly died in the attempt. (Our DM loves the fact that balors explode.)

Jennifer M. Formosa
Ontario
Canada

Appropriate Tactics

After reading Dennis R. Rose's criticism of the wizard class in issue #255, I feel obliged to come to the defense of the much-maligned mage.

Certainly, 1st-level wizards suffer a severe lack of hit points, but all 1st-level characters have this flaw. It's just a matter of degree: Wizards average 2.5 hit points, rogues 3.5, priests 4.5, and fighters 5.5. Not a lot of leeway for any of the classes, but nobody said the life of an adventurer is easy.

Besides, there are enough optional rules to give mages a fighting chance: –10 hp before death, higher hit points for starting characters, variants that increase the chance of scoring an exceptional Constitution, and others.

Armor Class is a mage's big weakness. Fighters and priests can wear what they like, and even rogues can wear leather armor, but wizards have nothing at all. This could be enough to dissuade the faint of heart from ever taking up the study of the arcane arts.

But putting all this in perspective, who goes toe-to-toe with the bad guys? Not wizards. They cheer for their comrades from the back, happily flinging daggers or darts into the melee. Furthermore, sensibly staying out of melee and avoiding being cut to pieces don't mean that wizards aren't being "active and participating in group efforts."

Wizards avoid other physical dangers too. Traps are left to rogues, and tricky moral dilemmas are the purview of priests.

Wizards have more deadly weapons in their arsenals: their brains. Wizards are noted for their Intelligence, which helps them survive to a comfortable old age. After all, with those bonus nonweapon proficiencies, it's the wizard who raises a warning hand and advises the rest of the party that the strange squiggle on the floor actually says "beware of the dragon" in some long-lost tongue or advises the rogue against eating those tasty-looking mushrooms.

Further, it is in the PCs' best interests to stick together and look out for one another—each class has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Are the 1st-level spells of any use? Apart from insisting on the ubiquitous *read magic*, I let my players pick their own spells; but even if the DM prefers to assign spells, there should be something for a resourceful wizard to work with, unless the DM is mean. It's not favoritism to assign a new wizard spells that might actually be useful.

Wizards are smart enough to know their limitations. "Weak, poor, unarmored, under-armed, inadequate combatants" they might be, but who else among the party can put foes to sleep, create illusions to scare away foes, float safely down a cliff, or *charm* a suspicious guard? Not to mention that wizards are likely to be the only party member that can harm some creatures.

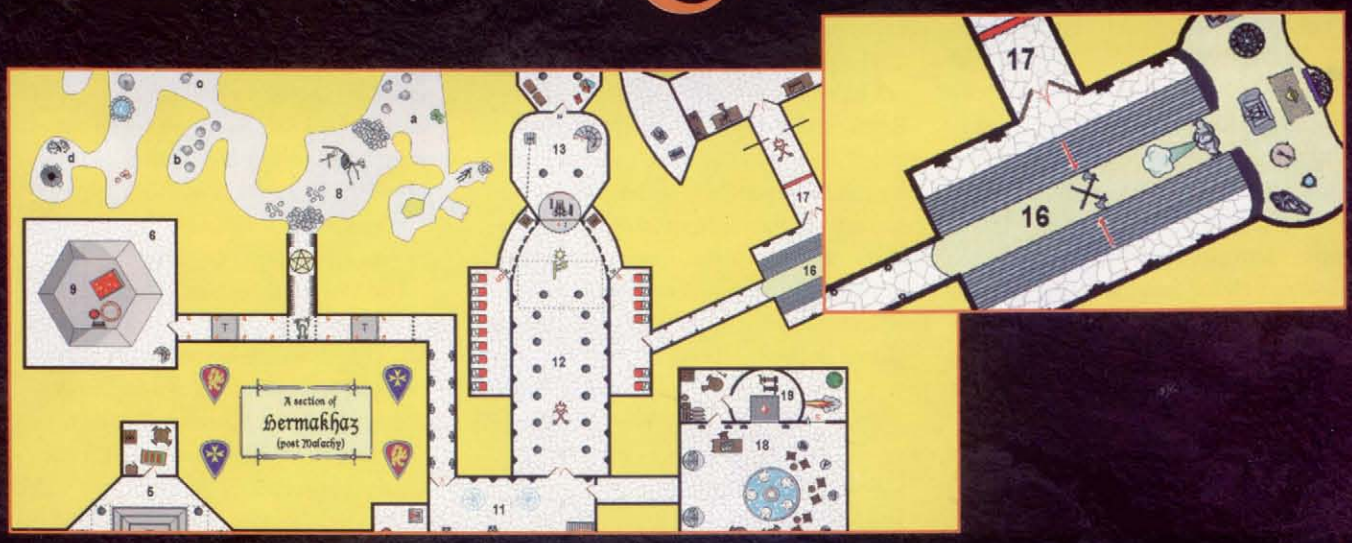
Creating magical items is not what wizards are renowned for. To take but a couple of fictional examples, I can't recall Merlin or Gandalf making any magical items. Admittedly, wizards can't

In my campaign, we have limited all magical weapons to provide only +1 to hit and damage.

Windows® 95/98 & Windows® NT 4

New from Profantasy Software Ltd

Dungeon Designer 2



Dungeon Designer 2 is the eagerly awaited first add-on product for Campaign Cartographer 2 and the Core Rules 2.0 Campaign Mapper.

For CC2 and Campaign Mapper users
DD2 has over 400 stunning symbols to make dungeon maps and floor plans beautiful. There are symbols for devious traps, doors, windows, strange statues, temple features and many others. You can create simple, distinctive generic maps or create professional quality full colour artwork for RPG publications.

For CC2 users
A single button click takes you to a new set of menus and icons that give you walls, easy corridors, t-junctions, crossroads as well as shortcuts to the different symbol catalogs. Break doors into walls with ease. DD2 has an optional "tiled" approach to building dungeons and dungeon sections that lets you prepare and print a dungeon design in minutes.

Dungeon Designer 2 is US$36.95 in the US and Canada, £24.95 in the rest of the world.
Upgrade for DOS users of Dungeon Designer US$27.95 in the US and Canada, £18.95 elsewhere.

TO ORDER
If your retailer does not stock Dungeon Designer 2
Internet go to ProFantasy's website at http://www.profantasy.com
In the US and Canada phone 1-800-841-1487 (Shipping $7.00, Rush Shipping $12.50)
Elsewhere phone UK 0171 738 8877 or fax UK 0171 738 8282 (£5.00 P&P UK, £10.00 elsewhere)

Questions?
e-mail dd2@profantasy.com or call our pre-sales enquiry line on 1-800-281-2411 8AM-8PM Hawaii Standard Time

Requirements
DD2 requires Campaign Cartographer 2 or AD&D® Core Rules 2.0 Campaign Mapper.
System requirements are any PC that runs Windows® 95/NT4/98 and an 800x600 display

The design revolution goes underground!

Campaign Mapper, AD&D and Core Rules 2.0 are trademarks owned by TSR. Windows is a trademark owned by the Microsoft Corporation.
Other trademarks are owned by **ProFantasy Software Ltd.**

produce many, which is probably why there is such a demand for adventuring parties to recover the legendary "Sword of Poindexter" from the tomb wherein it is purported to lie.

Taking all this into account, wizards are no better or worse than any other class. Each profession has its own strengths and weaknesses, and clever players adjust their tactics accordingly.

Kevin McMahon
Kelmscott, Western Australia

The Hidden System

A lot of hubbub has arisen about a possible 3rd edition of the AD&D® game, and a good portion of the upheaval is about character creation and the use of experience points. Some say that character creation should be point based, as in the *Skills & Powers* rules, and that the class-based system is a thing of the past. Other advocates believe that the class system is a tried-and-true method of character creation that has withstood the test of time. The point system allows more flexibility. The class system has kits that allow any amount of flexibility desired. The point system doesn't rely on an experience point level that is restrictive. The class system shows a reliable way of measuring a party's abilities. Both sides match each other point for point.

Surprisingly, this debate concentrates on the *Player's Handbook*, surprising because the answer already exists in a seldom-used section of the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* entitled "Creating New Character Classes."

These optional rules comprise only three pages of the AD&D universe, but they cry out to be used as the next evolutionary stage of this most loved of games. The rules allow players the flexibility of a point system while preserving the strength and familiarity of the class system. Using a base experience point table, the player chooses from a list of abilities. Each ability also has a number associated with it called a multiplier. The list is not divided like the proficiency system but is open to all takers. Once players choose the abilities for their characters, they use a simple formula to compute their unique experience charts.

Taking up only three pages in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*, the system is simple, elegant, and well balanced. The system also allows for the continued use of kits, proficiencies, ability scores, saving throws, magic, and psionics.

If the 3rd-Edition AD&D game is to use this system as a basis for character creation, the list of abilities needs some expansion and explanation.

The 3rd-Edition AD&D game should not be a new system of rules; the 2nd-Edition AD&D game wasn't. It eliminated elements that where clunky, but for the most part, the real difference came from the reorganization of information. So clean and sharpen the AD&D rules, but for character creation and advancement, expand the great system hiding in the *DMG*.

David R. Boruch
West Mifflin, PA

Uniform Magic

The appeal of magical weapons is strong, and their ability to unbalance a game is without peer. In my campaign, we have limited all magical weapons to provide only +1 to hit and damage. Our reasoning for this is as follows.

t higher levels, there isn't a single thief skill that can't be done more effectively or reliably by a wizard or priest spell.

When AD&D first began there were no rules for weapon specialization or mastery. Other than level advancement, the only way to represent the increasing power and combat capabilities of fighters was to give them magical weapons ranging from +1 to +5 in power. This worked until *Unearthed Arcana* introduced rules for weapon specialization.

There is even less use for (and more danger from) magical weapons now that the rules in *Skills & Powers* allow even more bonuses to weapon use. Under these rules, characters—particularly fighters—can become killing machines at extremely low levels.

Compare fighters, each with a modest Strength of 17, from the 1st-Edition AD&D game and 2nd-Edition *Skills & Powers*.

Under the both sets of rules, a Strength of 17 grants a +1 bonus to hit and a +1 bonus to damage—not much. So, at 1st level, our fighter has a THAC0 of 19 (base of 20, +1 for Strength). If he is armed with a longsword, he causes 2–9 (1d8 +1 for Strength) points of damage when he hits.

Suppose this fighter, after many adventures, has risen to 6th level and has found a *longsword* +2. His THAC0 is now 12 (base 15 for level, +1 for Strength, +2 for the *longsword*). Furthermore, his damage is 4–11 (1d8, +1 for Strength, +2 for the *longsword*). Total bonuses at 6th level: +3 to hit, +3 to damage, easily preserving game balance.

The same fighter is much more powerful under the *Skills & Powers* rules. Any player worth his salt will split the initial 17 Strength to give a Stamina score of 16 and a Muscle of 18. Assuming a reasonably good roll of 51 for the fighter's percentile bonus for an 18 Muscle, the fighter now has +2 to hit and +3 to damage. Adding specialization gives a further bonus of +1 to hit and +2 to damage. Finally, the character can also take the weapon of choice option for his longsword for an additional +1 to hit. The total bonuses for our first level fighter is +4 to hit and +5 to damage.

If we make this powerhouse a 6th-level fighter with a *longsword* +2, he becomes more powerful still. By 6th level he will be a master (+3 to hit, +3 to damage) in the longsword, resulting in a total bonuses of +8 to hit (+3 for weapon mastery, +2 for the magical sword, +1 for weapon of choice, +2 for an 18/51 Muscle) and +8 to damage (+3 for weapon master, +2 for the sword, +3 for the Muscle attribute).

For this reason we limit the magical weapons in our *Skills & Powers* campaign to +1 to hit and damage. This small modification keeps the game balanced, while preserving the possibility of discovering magical weapons.

This also streamlines a lot of the paperwork and notekeeping for the DM to track during a game and concentrates on

Show Some Spine

You found Ewan. What's left of him.
So he stole the ExoSoft chip. So your pilot's dead. Your ship is nova dust.
But the bastard doesn't deserve this . . . undeath for corporate interests.
Better dead than ExoDrone. Time to close the deal, my sweet. Time to die.

STAR DRIVE®
CAMPAIGN SETTING

Murder in Drivespace
Star*Drive® adventure
Bill Slavicsek and Richard Dakan
Available September

An ambassador from a newly discovered alien species has been murdered en route to an important diplomatic summit. The transit ship will emerge from drivespace in five days. You must bring the killer to justice and save the tenuous new alliance.

ALTERNITY®
Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

Questions? Call (800) 324-6496

Visit our website at <www.tsr.com>

Find yourself. Somewhere else.

SILVER ANNIVERSARY

TSR, Alternity, Star*Drive, and the TSR, Alternity, and Star*Drive logos are trademarks of TSR, Inc.
TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

the story. Does Todd's character have the *shortsword +3*, or is it Steve's? Maureen's thief just found the *dagger +3*, but she doesn't know, so the DM secretly adds the bonus to her attack and damage rolls.

Daniel Thomson
Burnaby, British Columbia

Ready, Steady, Cast

Justin Bacon has the problem pinpointed. "Memorization" of spells has caused great confusion. Few people have read Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* stories which seem to have inspired the use of the term. I suggest "preparation" as a possible alternative.

I agree with the idea of allowing any spell to be cast if the wizard wants to use the time. However, I have always viewed spell memorization as involving readying the magical energies that the spell eventually releases. As each spell would be different, I expect a previously memorized spell would have to be un-memorized first, requiring even more time.

I have also felt that spell levels are discrete. The energy of 2nd-level spells comes from a different place than that of 1st-level ones: a qualitative rather than a quantitative difference. No number of 1st-level spells can be combined to work 2nd-level magic, although it would be possible to handle lesser energies and cast a 1st-level spell in lieu of more difficult magic.

Rex V. Settle
Okemos, MI

Class Conflict

I don't feel that any one class is too strong. I've had a wide variety of classes chosen over the years, and no one class seems to draw any favoritism. However, I have noticed that the thief is without a doubt the weakest class in the game.

Most classes fit certain roles. Fighters get in front, fight, and absorb damage. Priests aid where they can, provide healing, and fight when needed. Wizards stay in the back and throw spells. However, thieves are required to fill many of these roles. The thief must detect and defeat any traps encountered and fight nearly as much as the fighters. Thieves are also the most likely to be caught by themselves when the party wants them to scout ahead to see what dangers await. A d6 hit points just don't cut it for these situations.

Giving thieves a d8 to determine hit points might help, but it won't solve the problem entirely. The biggest problems thieves face are their inability to do damage at higher levels and their thief skills being inversely valuable to level advancement. At higher levels, there isn't a single thief skill that can't be done more effectively or reliably by a wizard or priest spell. That makes most of those skills more or less useless. Of course, a DM can always limit what wizard spells are available, but we're speaking in general right now.

I have found that an experienced martial artist can execute dozens of attacks in a matter of seconds.

Also, as classes go up in levels, all except the thief can inflict more damage. Fighters gain extra attacks, bonuses from weapon mastery, and percentile Strength. Wizards and priests both get powerful offensive spells, but the thief has only backstab, which isn't nearly as useful as the abilities the rest of the classes have access to.

So here are my suggestions. First, switch thief and priest THAC0s. By definition, thieves steal to survive and will sooner or later encounter fights, but there are just as many pacifist priests as there are warring ones, if not more so. Thieves should be able to handle themselves better in a fight than priests.

Secondly, I made some extra abilities available to thieves. Detect Lie and Combatics are both percentile based. Detect Lie is self-explanatory.

Combatics is basically a free action that allows the character to perform amazing feats of agility and grace. The options are limited to active, rather than responsive decisions. Examples include faking out an opponent to avoid an attack of opportunity, diving between a larger opponent's legs to set up for a backstab, or running across the remains of a collapsing bridge.

The last ability I added is called Precision. A thief who takes Precision can't purchase specialization, weapon of choice, or expertise. There are three levels of precision that follow a similar structure to weapon mastery.

Precision—1st level (2 CP). Weapon damage for all thief weapons is always the bigger die rolled. A longsword's damage (d8/d12) simply becomes d12 regardless of the opponent's size.

Skilled Precision—5th level (4 CP). At a –4 penalty to hit, any thief weapon inflicts damage one dice category higher. A longsword (d12) with a Skilled Precision check inflicts 1d20 points of damage.

Deadly Precision—10th level (6 CP). At a –8 penalty to hit, any thief weapon does damage at two die categories higher. A longsword (d12) with a Deadly Precision check inflicts 1d30 points of damage.

Precision can be combined with a backstab, but penalties are cumulative. So a thief backstabbing with deadly precision has a –12 penalty to hit. Precision represents the time a thief spends learning to master the tools of his trade. A thief can use precision only with thief weapons, and only a thief can buy precision.

I also allow thieves to spend two character points when they advance a level to increase a thief ability by 5%.

Mike Walko
Kent, OH

You Don't Know Monks

I am a seasoned martial artist, and the possible 3rd Edition has made me want to express the flaws in the AD&D unarmed combat system.

The unarmed combat system was created for warriors without swords. The rules show only how big, physical brawlers fight unarmed. This is fine for warriors, but not a Shao-Lin-style monk who fights with quick, technical blows.

In my experience fighting with real European weapons, I have found that a skilled martial artist can execute dozens of attacks in a matter of seconds. Here is my ideal combat system showcasing the abilities of monks:

A monk with four years of training could execute 7–10 hand techniques in

the time it takes to attack with a sword, 8–15 hand techniques in the time it takes to attack with an ax or morning star, and 15–30 hand techniques in the time it takes to attack with a bow.

When combining kicks with hand techniques, each additional kick requires the amount of time needed to perform 1.5 hand techniques. The average martial artist has legs that are four times as strong as their arms, and they should get an extra advantage for that. However, kicks can be done only at the beginning of an attack series, or the attacker must make a Dexterity check to avoid falling.

Monks should also be able to execute 1–2 called attacks without having to roll. No more than four "called attacks" should be done in a row. In addition, monks who repeat the same (non-called) attack throughout an entire round should receive 3–5 additional attacks. Monks who specialize in one martial art should also receive bonuses.

Those are a few ideas to use in the revision of warrior monk fighting. I love playing a monk, but the poor unarmed combat system really hurts the experience. A monk with no weapon should be as deadly (if not more) than anyone with a sword. I have devoted my life to the fighting arts, so please believe me when I say that you have a long way to go.

Dirk Keaton
dkeic@juno.com

A New Armor Class

The thing that has always complicated the AD&D game for me is the Armor Class game mechanic. The following small adjustment would simplify the system and make a 3rd Edition easier for new players to grasp.

The basic premise for my change is that a PC with no armor should have an AC of 0. Subsequent improvements can then be signified by adding to this base. Thus, someone with just a shield would have an AC of 1. The bigger the number, the better your AC. This makes even more sense when adding magical items. A *shield +1* would afford an AC of 2.

Of course, changing the AC means changing the THAC0 tables. This is simply a matter of subtracting 10 from the existing ones. To calculate the value needed to hit a specific AC, you merely add the two numbers together. Thus a 1st-level warrior (THAC0 10) trying to hit someone with just a shield would need to roll 11 or above.

Attack bonuses can be subtracted from the THAC0 as normal at character generation or added to the die roll during combat.

In answer to Dennis Rose's question about wizards being weenies (issue #255) all you need to do is find a DM who emphasizes roleplaying and rewards characters for using their brains. I expect mages in my parties to direct battles intelligently, handle negotiations, and find novel solutions to puzzles. A mage's one *light* spell, if used cleverly, could turn the tide of a battle and justify a full share of the experience.

It would appear that nobody in your group enjoys playing wizards, which might explain why they don't last long.

Colin Daniels
Havant, Hampshire
England

ORCS NEST
TWO ONE TO THE ORKIE BOYS!
Most other games shops have only got one floor of RPGs... WE'VE GOT TWO!
Plus loads of miniatures, CCGs, boardgames, historical wargames and accessories!
Tottenham Ct Road
Charing Cross Rd
Shaftesbury Ave
Earlham St
6
ORCS NEST
Leicester Sq
..And we've got a website... www.orcsnest.com
full lists of all available RPG material...weekly updates with details of new releases ...
Online ordering from the ORCS NEST on-lion games shoppe
THE ORCS NEST SHOP IS AT 6 EARLHAM ST. LONDON WC2H 9RY U.K.
Right in the centre of London. 2 Minutes from Leicester Square underground station
Tel 0171-379-4254

Dungeoncraft

Need Help?
Send your questions and anecdotes about running AD&D® game adventures to:

"Dungeoncraft"
℅ *DRAGON Magazine*
1801 Lind Avenue S.W.
Renton, WA 98055

Send email to
dmail@wizards.com

By Ray Winninger

You can't run a memorable AD&D® campaign without creating some memorable nonplayer characters. Think about it. The only tools you can use to bring your campaign setting alive in your players' imaginations are your descriptions, storylines, and NPCs. Of these, only the NPCs give you an opportunity to step into your own world and flesh it out from the inside. Your NPCs allow you to ham it up and bring the game world to life. They give you a chance to step out from behind your DM's screen and get in on the action. Your characterization of NPCs is especially critical because your players look to you for guidance in developing their own characters. If your NPCs are lively, your players are likely to follow your lead with more memorable creations of their own.

Last month, we identified the first nonplayer inhabitants of our campaign world. In this month's installment and the next, we'll explore strategies for making those NPCs an effective part of the campaign. But before you can create great NPCs, you must first understand the various roles they are likely to play in your adventures, so let's begin with a discussion of ...

Four Things You Can (and Should!) Do With NPCs

1. Provide the Players with Exposition

NPCs are a great tool you can use to introduce the players to information about your setting. There is probably some resident somewhere on your campaign world who can answer just about any question the players might want to pose. The wizened sage who lives in the big city can probably identify the runes on that ancient book the adventurers pulled out of the last dungeon they visited. The local king can probably give the party a clue as to why his daughter recently disappeared. The goblin lord probably knows when the five tribes are planning to assault the local stronghold and how they might approach it. Of course, some or all of these folks are probably not inclined to share their secrets, leaving it up to the players to figure out how to loosen their tongues!

When creating an NPC, it's important to think about what he or she knows. What important questions might the NPC answer? How can this information help the players? What secrets might the NPC potentially reveal? You should also think about how the players might gain this information. Is the NPC someone the PCs might befriend or someone they must outwit? And then there are some NPCs who are designed to reveal their information without any sort of coaxing from the players. Imagine an old beggar who aimlessly wanders around the city mumbling about some terrible creature he encountered in the forest long ago, or a traveling minstrel who moves from inn to inn singing ballads of great heroes and their adventures. When NPCs are free with helpful information, make sure they keep their revelations as subtle as possible. Make it at least a little challenging for the players to puzzle out the significance of any information they glean. The wandering beggar shouldn't come right out and tell the players that the creature he met was a wyvern. Instead, he should describe "a terrible hiss," "wings that blotted out the sun," or a "razor-sharp tail." Clever players will get the hint, deduce the creature's identity, and take the appropriate precautions before venturing into the forest themselves.

2. Offer the PCs Services and Tactical Options

Typical adventurers are able folks, but even the most experienced and well-equipped group can't do everything for itself. Sooner or later, the PCs will need the services of a blacksmith, a sage, or a moneylender. This means that whenever you create an NPC, you should also consider what that character can do for the PCs—and what it might take for the PCs to procure these services.

A good AD&D campaign presents the players with a web of possible solutions to any problem they encounter, and NPCs are likely to occupy key positions within this web. Suppose, for example, that the PCs retrieve a magical sword from a dungeon but are unsure of the weapon's true nature and capabilities. In a well-developed campaign, they'd have several clear options, allowing them the freedom to choose and reinforcing the idea that their destinies lie in their own hands. They might simply use the sword and try to deduce its capabilities from its performance. They might mount an

expedition to recover a lost spellbook of which they've heard, hoping it contains an *identify* spell or other lore concerning the weapon. They might visit a nearby sage in hopes that he'll recognize the blade, or they might travel all the way to the big city, where they can hire a friendly wizard to cast an *identify* spell for them. Of course, for these latter options to work, the PCs must have already met these two NPCs and familiarized themselves with their capabilities. To build these sorts of options into your own game, you should anticipate the services the players might need in the months ahead, then liberally sprinkle appropriate NPCs all over your setting. Likely services usually include help with: spellcasting, identifying magical items, buying and selling equipment, raising money, acquiring information, and ensuring adequate security.

Keep in mind that the services your NPCs can supply aren't very helpful if the players are unaware that they are available. The local captain of the guard might be an expert jeweler, but this ability won't provide the players with any problem-solving options until the players discover the guard's expertise. This doesn't mean that you should immediately reveal the capabilities of your NPCs to the players, but think about how and when you might go about making those disclosures. If the capabilities of the NPCs aren't obvious, try to reveal them in as subtle a fashion as possible.

A couple of months after the campaign begins, for instance, the PCs might stumble across a fracas in the local marketplace. An old man and a merchant are loudly arguing over the value of a small ruby, each threatening to pummel the other. Apparently, the son of the old man bought the ruby from the merchant earlier in the day. When the son returned home, his father discovered that the gem was flawed and that his son had been fleeced. For his part, the seller insists that the ruby is exceptional and that the boy's father is near-sighted and senile. Eventually, a patrol led by the captain of the guard comes on the scene. When he learns the nature of the dispute, the captain snatches the ruby, holds it up to the light and announces that the old man is correct. He then threatens to imprison the merchant unless he returns the boy's money, quickly ending the incident. When his fellow soldiers look to him with surprise, the captain explains that his own father is a jeweler and that he mastered some of the basic skills early in his youth. Once the PCs have witnessed this scene, they realize that they could potentially turn to the captain should they need a gem appraised in the future.

For maximum effect, this revelation should come long before the PCs might actually need the guard's services. Otherwise, it will seem like you're conveniently suggesting a course of action and doing their job for them. The trick is to make the players feel like they're clever for remembering that guard they encountered all those adventures ago.

3. Propel the PCs into Adventures

As you create each of your NPCs, think about how each of them might direct, drag, or otherwise coax the players into undertaking an adventure. NPCs might possess information that is just begging to be investigated, or they might keep secrets that reveal danger or opportunity when uncovered

Dear Dungeoncraft

Dear Dungeoncraft,

I don't like the idea of material spell components. To me, the notion of wizards traveling across the countryside with huge backpacks full of newt's legs, pearls, and pinches of salt seems goofy and unheroic. I envision the wizards in my campaign world as spooky, mysterious guys don't talk much and have few worldly possessions—sort of like the Jedi Knights in *Star Wars*. I realize that I'm expected to change any rules I don't like, but I'm afraid that simply ignoring the material components will unbalance the game. Any suggestions?

—Footloose in Fremont

Dear Footloose,

I understand your dilemma, but even totally ignoring material spell components shouldn't have any real effect on game balance until your players reach relatively high experience levels (12th or higher). Even at that point, the impact should be relatively minimal. Still, fair is fair.

The easiest solution to this problem is to calculate the monetary value of any material components the wizard would normally need to cast a spell and instead require the player to spend an equal value on something that is unrelated to spellcasting and makes more sense in your campaign world. In essence, the wizard is "purchasing" the privilege of memorizing the spell. For example, instead of spending 50 gp to purchase a gem for use as a material component, the wizard might instead spend 50 gp on a religious offering, a donation to the poor, or miscellaneous "research materials." Although the magical effect isn't really the direct result of the expenditure, you and your player understand that these purchases are the price that wizards must pay to otherwise ignore material components.

Dear Dungeoncraft,

I'd like to give my campaign an epic feel by staging an adventure in which one of my players finds out that the evil wizard he's been battling for months is actually his long lost brother. Although I think this would make for a great story, I'm not sure the player will react well. He enjoys writing detailed stories about his character's past, and I'm afraid that he'll view such a revelation as an intrusion into his characterization. I realize that it's his character, but it's my game! What should I do?

—Befuddled in Brooklyn

Dear Befuddled,

Some players really enjoy it when the DM explores their characters' pasts, and others prefer to provide this sort of detail on their own. This particular player definitely seems to fall into the latter camp. Presuming that he's sharing these stories with you and the rest of your players, he's actually doing you a great service by fleshing out his character. (You are scanning the stories for springboards that might lead to future adventures, aren't you?) Interfering might upset the player and damage the game. I know it might spoil the surprise, but try asking the player if he's interested in such a revelation before you spring it. The other players can still be completely surprised at the revelation.

There are many strategies to use NPCs as adventure springboards. One tried and true method is to give the players some reason to care about the NPC—which shouldn't be too hard with good-aligned adventurers—then place the NPC in danger. For example, any AD&D adventurers worth their salt should rush off to save a friend's recently kidnapped son, giving you a great opportunity to throw some interesting and entertaining obstacles in the way. Similarly, what if an adventurer's sister is accused of witchcraft and threatened with execution? This should prompt the PCs to investigate, inevitably leading to a confrontation with the entity who is really responsible for the unexplained events that have panicked the townspeople.

Another classic method of using NPCs to trigger adventures is to create characters who are interested in hiring the PCs to undertake some dangerous assignment. Maybe a local merchant needs an armed escort to accompany a caravan he plans to send across the Murky Swamp, or a powerful wizard is looking for a party capable of procuring those wyvern's teeth she needs to cast an important spell. While it's easy to use this method to launch new adventures, try to employ it sparingly. Using NPCs in this fashion often feels like you are telling the players what you want them to do. This is OK every once in a while, but in general you should allow the players to feel like they've undertaken an adventure on their own initiative. That way, you'll give the players a sense of empowerment and reinforce the idea that they are making as many contributions to the storyline as you are.

A third method that bears a mention is simply to create an NPC who is bound to become an adversary to the adventurers. If one of the PCs is a priest, introducing an important NPC priest from a rival sect is sure to result in the two characters' crossing ... er, maces. One great way to make this tactic more effective is to introduce a foe whom the players don't immediately recognize as an adversary. Generally, the more time that elapses between the introduction of the NPC and the revelation of his or her true nature, the more dramatic the end result. Imagine the shock when the players discover that the kindly innkeeper they met fifteen or twenty adventures ago is actually the vampire responsible for the strange killings that have plagued the campaign world over the last two years.

4. Create Atmosphere

Finally, NPCs are a great way to lend the game a touch of sorely needed atmosphere. You might think about creating an appropriately goofy NPC who can visit and liven things up when necessary or an appropriately somber NPC who can bring the players back down to earth when they are getting too silly. While these sorts of NPCs can be quite useful, it's important that you don't overuse them. Try to confine their appearances to no more than once per adventure to guarantee that they don't hog too much of the floor and draw attention away from the players' characters.

On a related note, it's not a bad idea to create an important "stereotypical" representative of each of the most important social and political factions in your campaign world. Making sure that the players frequently cross paths with these characters is a great way to help the players learn to understand these various groups and the roles they play in the setting. In other words, if the elves of your world are generally proud and arrogant, you might introduce a particularly arrogant elf whom the adventurers often encounter. This will give them a better idea of what to expect from other elves and help them recognize and appreciate the unusual elves who run counter to the stereotype.

Tarrin and Jarrak

To illustrate some of these principles in action, let's return to the two sample NPCs from last month's installment: Tarrin the guard captain and Jarrak the wizard. Tarrin is Richard's second-in-command of the Ironoak stronghold and the captain of all the guards stationed there. Years ago, he lost his left hand to the curse of an evil cult leader. Jarrak is a powerful and mysterious wizard who once devised a potent spell that saved the stronghold from devastation. Jarrak has never shared the secret of this spell.

Tarrin is probably best used to 2) Provide the Players with Tactical Options, and 3) Propel the PCs into Adventure. Since the military might of Ironoak is essentially under his control, the PCs can earn the option of seeking assistance from his troops whenever a crisis arises. Of course, you can't allow Tarrin to fight the PCs' battles for them; his assistance should definitely come at an appropriate price and on Tarrin's own terms. If the PCs have nowhere else to turn, however, he can be a very powerful ally. As for propelling the PCs into adventures, you can make special plans for Tarrin's missing hand, as hinted in the last installment. Eventually, the cult that left its curse on Tarrin (and the hand itself) will reappear and threaten Ironoak, dragging the PCs into the conflict.

For his part, Jarrak is best used to 1) Provide the Players with Exposition and 3) Propel the PCs into Adventure. That Jarrak is a wise and formidable wizard with his own mysterious agenda is already established. He certainly has access to important myths, legends, and other facts that could benefit the PCs on their journeys, and the fact that he occasionally emerges to share this knowledge with the PCs won't seem unusual. They're likely to presume that he is assisting them for his own mysterious purposes. Eventually, Jarrak might propel the player characters into adventure by asking them to duplicate his feat of saving Ironoak from the same marauders who attacked it decades ago, as he is now too old to combat the fiends on his own. In fact, at the climax of this adventure, one or more of the PCs might even earn the opportunity to convince Jarrak to share the secret of his powerful spell.

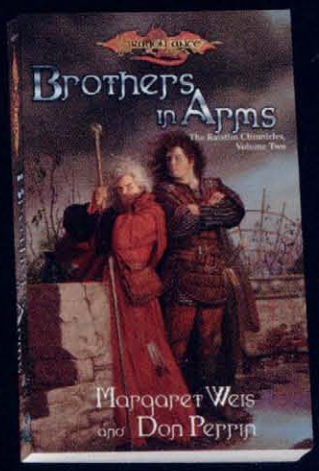
Next month, we'll look at the details you should create to flesh out an NPC, and we'll concoct some examples from the world of Aris.

Ray Winninger is a long-time writer and game designer. He could really use a couple days off.

INNOCENCE LOST. TROUBLE FOUND.

In the fiery siege of the city of Hope's End, the young mage Raistlin must leave behind his ideals to save himself and his brother. Yet, while Raistlin and Caramon train as mercenaries, far away another soul is forged in the heat of battle.

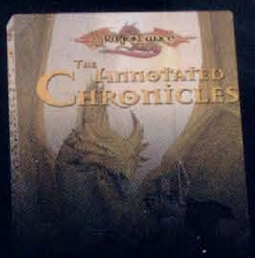
It is Kitiara Uth Matar, the twins' half-sister—a future dragon highlord who has begun her rise to power.



Brothers in Arms
Margaret Weis and Don Perrin
Available August

DragonLance

Also available:
The Siege of Mt. Nevermind,
The Chaos War Series
by Fergus Ryan



The *New York Times* bestselling authors bring new insights and material to the trilogy that captured over 16 million readers worldwide.

Questions? Call (800) 324-6496
or visit our website at <www.tsr.com>.

TSR, **Dragonlance**, and the TSR and **Dragonlance** logos are registered trademarks of TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Sage Advice

Need Some Help With Your Game?

In the U.S.:
"Sage Advice," *Dragon® Magazine*,
1801 Lind Avenue S.W.,
Renton, WA 98055.
In Europe:
"Sage Advice," *Dragon Magazine*,
Wizards of the Coast, Belgium
P.O. Box 2031, 2600 Berchem, Belgium
+32-70-23-32-88
In the U.K.:
"Sage Advice," *Dragon Magazine*
Wizards of the Coast, P.O. Box 61
Maidenhead, Berkshire SL61FX

thesage@wizards.com

The Sage cannot make personal replies;
please include no SASE with your questions.

By Skip Williams

This month, the Sage ponders sundry AD&D® game questions straight from the mailbag and makes a side trip into the universe of the Alternity® game.

I am a little confused about reaction adjustments for Charisma. Is there a chart showing how NPCs react? I have found a chart in the *Dungeon Master® Guide* for creature reactions, but I don't think it applies to NPCs.

Use Table 59 in the *Dungeon Master Guide*. The chart works for monsters and NPCs. Positive Charisma adjustments (reaction bonuses) are subtracted from the 2d10 roll. Negative Charisma adjustments (reaction penalties) are added to the 2d10 roll.

It takes some common sense and improvisation to use the table. For example, if PCs try to bluff their way past a group of guards by posing as entertainers, you might use the first column on the chart (for a friendly approach). No matter what the PCs' Charisma scores are, they probably won't succeed unless at least one of them has a decent entertainment proficiency (Singing, Dancing, Tumbling, or the like). If the PCs put on a good performance, you might allow them a normal roll on Table 59; if they blew the performance, they should suffer a penalty.

If the PCs roll low on Table 59, the guards will be friendly toward them, but that doesn't mean the guards look the other way while the PCs sneak past them. Unless the guards are really stupid or exceedingly disloyal to their employers, they'll probably just smile and offer the PCs a few coins for a good performance. If the PCs push their luck, the friendly guards might conclude that the PCs are crazy (or drunk) and might try to capture the PCs in as gentle a manner as they can manage. Even if the guards agree to admit the PCs, they might insist on giving them an escort.

The *Complete Sha'ir's Handbook* says a spellslayer must perform an attack roll to use the special power of disconnecting an enemy wizard from his or her spells. Can the spellslayer use this power only in melee? What AC must the spellslayer hit? Which magical protections apply?

Spellslaying is strictly a melee attack. The spellslayer has to hit the target's regular Armor Class. If the spellslayer hits, the target is allowed a saving throw vs. death magic to avoid the effect. Any defensive magical item that provides a general bonus to saving throws (as opposed to a bonus vs. a specific attack form) applies to the death save. Ability bonuses, racial bonuses, and magic resistance do not apply.

The description for the 2nd-level *rain of blood* spell from the *Complete Sha'ir's Handbook* says that each target in the area of effect loses hit points equivalent to their Armor Class every round. What happens to targets that have negative Armor Classes? Surely they aren't healed!

The spell has no effect, or you can assume there is a minimum loss of 1 hit point a round. I recommend the latter.

Will a character who has been shot with an arrow suffer additional damage if he or she continues to fight, move, or take other strenuous action before pulling out the arrow?

A hit from an arrow inflicts damage only once (barring some special magical property the arrow might have). Note that in the AD&D game's abstract combat system, any nonfatal "hit" from an arrow probably represents the arrow just scratching the target or perhaps bouncing off the target's armor.

My character found a very unstable bridge that spanned a chasm. I decided to send the character across, and my DM informed me that my character had to make six Dexterity checks. Do you

Will a character who has been shot with an arrow suffer additional damage if he or she continues to fight ... ?

think six Dexterity checks is too much? By the way, I failed one of the checks, and the character fell to his death.

If your DM didn't think six Dexterity checks were too many, I sure don't. Perhaps your DM made an error, or perhaps you did. The next time you're faced with a similar situation, be sure you understand what your character is facing. Ask how long the bridge is. Ask how hard the wind is blowing. Have your character look at and feel the bridge's surface to find out if it's slippery. Have your character put a foot on the bridge to see if it sways or bounces easily. Finally, when it comes time to make that first Dexterity check, ask how far your character has gone—the first check might be a sign that it's time to turn around and go back to solid ground.

The priest spell *stone shape* has a casting time of 1 round. Does this mean that the stone being shaped slowly flows into its new shape as the spell progresses? Or is the stone shaped instantly when the spell is finished? Is it possible to use a *stone shape* spell to make an area of stone swallow up a foe and crush him?

Exactly how stone shaped with a *stone shape* spell acts is up to the DM. Each use of the spell, however, can make the stone take only one new shape. It would take two spells (and thus 2 rounds of spellcasting) to make a pit and then close it up. Creatures caught in such a pit are expelled from the pit, not crushed.

Is it possible to use a *cloak of displacement* and a *ring of blinking* together? If so, what would the effect be?

Yes, characters can wear magical cloaks and magical rings together, even these two.

When the character is attacked, first check to see if the *ring of blinking* foils the attack. If the *ring* does not foil the attack, resolve the attacks exactly as you would against any other person wearing a *cloak of displacement*. That is, the first attack against the *cloak* wearer during the encounter fails. If this is not the,first attack against the *cloak* wearer this encounter, the *cloak* wearer receives a -2 Armor Class bonus. This is true even if the *cloak* wearer has evaded an earlier attack through *blinking*.

The Morale section in the *Dungeon Master Guide* says the base morale rating for henchmen is 12 and that hirelings have a base morale of 10. Table 49, however gives the ratings as 15 for henchmen and 12 for hirelings. Which is correct?

Use the values from Table 49.

According to the *College of Wizardry* accessory, the skill score for the Aleph I proficiency is level minus 4, adjusted for Wisdom. Which Wisdom modifier applies? If the subability rules from *Skills & Powers* are in play, which Wisdom subability applies?

Use the character's magical defense adjustment from Wisdom. The Wisdom/Willpower subability determines a character's magical defense adjustment.

Is it possible to use a cloak of displacement and a ring of blinking together?

What does a person *charmed* with the 1st-level *charm person* spell feel once the spell is finally broken? Does the subject know he or she was tricked? Or does the subject simply lose the attraction to the spellcaster? If a *charmed* person is treated well while the spell is in effect, could the character actually choose to become a henchman? What happens if a character is *charmed* and then the *charm* caster dies?

There's nothing in the *charm person* spell description that implies the subject can feel the spell taking effect or wearing off. The spellcaster also does not necessarily know whether the spell works or when it has ended. When a *charm person* spell wears off, the subject simply no longer finds the caster so trustworthy and companionable. Particularly sharp characters probably suspect a magical influence.

Charm person subjects also do not automatically feel hostility toward the spell caster when the effect wears off, though any hostility they might have felt before receiving the spell remains (perhaps amplified by the caster's actions while the spell was running). If a subject was not inclined to dislike the spellcaster before receiving the spell and nothing has happened that would sour the subject's opinion of the caster, there is no reason why the subject and the caster could not interact normally from then on. In such a case, the subject is just as likely to become the caster's henchman as any other NPC.

If a *charm person* caster dies before the spell's effect on a subject wears off, nothing special happens. The spell runs its course and can be detected or dispelled. However, only the caster can exercise control over the subject. Since the caster is dead, the lingering spell has no further effect on the subject, though the subject might feel some regret over the passing of his or her "friend."

If a target has both cover and concealment, how is the modifier calculated? For example, a bandit is standing halfway behind a tree (50% cover, or –4 to Armor Class), and the surrounding undergrowth provides 25% concealment (–1 to Armor Class). What is the resulting modifier? Technically, you can't just add them together, because concealment is more effective when there is less to conceal.

In general, do not add similar modifiers together. In this case, you could assume the character is 75% concealed (50% hard cover implies 50% concealment, plus the additional 25% from the undergrowth). This grants only a –3 Armor Class bonus, which is still not as good as the –4 Armor Bonus from 50% cover, so just use the better bonus.

Is the table of movement rates for the *cube of force* correct? Why would the effect of the first face, which only keeps out gases, impose the slowest movement rate?

The movement rate for the first face should be 10, not 1.

The spell *darkning bolt* is listed as a 4th-level spell in the *Wizards' Spell Compendium*, Volume 1. However, some of the spell lists in Volume 4 list *darkning bolt* as a 3rd-level spell. Which is correct? (There is something

ALTERNITY® Game Questions

Do mechalus data filaments count as NIJacks as stated in the article about them in issue #250?

Yes, and that's official. Mechalus do not need a true NIJack to operate a computer or gridcaster.

Do the mechalus have some way of healing the cyber half of their bodies the way they heal the biological half?

Mechalus aren't true cyborgs in that they do not have a biological portion and a cybernetic portion. For healing purposes, a mechalus's "body" includes its two neural data slots, internal nanocomputer, and its bio-organic reflex device. (See page 24 in the *ALTERNITY Player's Handbook*.) All these parts heal normally, though any other cyberware added must be repaired if damaged, just like any other piece of equipment.

The *Player's Handbook* says that heroes can use last resorts to change the degree of their success and that of their enemies. In situations where the hero is faced with vehicular weaponry or other weapons of mass destruction, where even a Failure result by the enemy is likely to cause serious injury or death, is it possible to spend a last resort point to change a Failure to a Critical Failure?

No, you can't force a Critical Failure with a last resort point. You can, however, make a dodge attempt against any kind of attack. (See page 45 in the *Gamemaster Guide*.) You can spend a last resort point to improve your dodge result and produce enough step penalties to keep a big weapon from hurting your hero. (ALTERNITY game co-designer Rich Baker calls this option "hitting the dirt.") Note that if the step penalty turns an enemy's result into a Critical Failure, there is no penalty; it's treated as an ordinary Failure.

How does one determine the outcome of a complex skill check (that is, Ordinary, Good, Amazing)? Does it depend on the final roll, or is it dependent on all the rolls made in the skill check?

Complex skill checks don't produce Ordinary, Good, or Amazing results; you either succeed at a complex skill check or you don't.

The *Player's Handbook* says that even after cutting power to the life support system on a starship, the atmosphere lasts until all the oxygen is used and replaced by carbon dioxide. This is common sense, but how much oxygen is there per square meter? How long would it take to use up all the air?

According to the *Starships* supplement, you divide the ship's total durability by its number of crew. The result is the number of hours before the ship becomes an A3 environment. (See the *Gamemaster Guide*, page 64 for descriptions of environments.)

Can an accumulator be used with a mass reactor as a boost to provide power for extended starfalls? That is, can three accumulators provide the 30 power factors to give a ship a 10 LY starfall instead of a 5 LY starfall?

No, a stardrive must run directly off a mass reactor and cannot run off an accumulator at all.

A ship's stardrive allows the ship to travel any distance in 5 days from starfall to starrise, right? Does the trip seem to be instantaneous for the crew, or do they experience the 5 days? If they are aware, what kind of environment does their ship travel though?

Passengers experience time passing while their ship traverses drivespace. Drivespace itself looks like a featureless black void. People claim to see things in it from time to time, but these reports are discounted as hallucinations.

From what I've read, all of the faster-than-light methods of travel (stardrive, wormholes, and jumpgates) seem to punch a hole in our universe, travel through another, and punch another hole in ours to return. If this is true, what affect do all these holes have on our universe?

This is unrevealed. According to *Starships*, light plays around a ship that is making a starfall or entering starrise, which would indicate that there is some kind of energy released or consumed. The phenomenon has no recognized effects.

of a revolt brewing among the wizards in my campaign.)

Better man the barricades. *Darkning bolt* is a 4th-level spell. Its presence on 3rd-level spell lists is an editorial error.

If a specialty priest has access to a sphere, but the sphere has the notation "(rev)," is the character limited only to the reverse versions of spells within that sphere?

Any book that contains priest listings will include a section (usually in the front) on how to read the listings; check there to find out what "(rev)" means in a particular book. If the book offers no explanation, assume that "(rev)" means the priest must use a spell's reverse—and only the reverse—if it has one.

I have a priest in the party who wants to use the *dimensional folding* spell as a banishment tool. He casts the spell below a target he wishes to do away with and sends the victim to a point 10 feet above a volcano that the character spent a reasonable amount of time locating and viewing. Is it OK to allow the target a saving throw?

The gate this spell creates is always vertical (or parallel to the caster in locales that lack any definite "up" or "down"). The gate cannot be placed on or beneath a creature. If the gate is placed so that a creature might blunder into it by accident, the creature receives a saving throw vs. spell, adjusted for race, Dexterity, and magical defenses. Note that it might be possible for one of the caster's enemies to push the caster through the gate.

Can spells such as *power word, stun* and *power word, kill* be successfully cast on creatures without minds, such as undead or golems?

The presence or absence of a mind has no effect on the workings of a *power word* spell. Golems, however, cannot be affected by *power word* spells—or most other spells for that matter. (See the golem descriptions in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ tome.)

Only living creatures can be killed by death effects, which lets undead creatures off the hook for *power word, kill*. I recommend that you allow only living creatures to be stunned, as well.

Battle the Darkness of the Laria and Build Your Own World

Shattered Light™

"Delivers what CRPG fans have been clamoring for... *customization*."
—*Gamesmania*

Shattered Light is the first RPG to deliver near limitless expansion and modification. Its revolutionary World Builder engine allows players to customize:

- **Maps • Spells**
- **Monster Statistics • Skills**
- **Items and Weapons**
- **NPC text**

And create entire new dominions with more than 4,000 terrain tiles.

Invite your friends to join you with Shattered Light's Multiplayer feature. Play modem-to-modem with up to 8 players on line.

Write your own quests or follow those written by such award-winning authors as:

- **Chelsea Quinn Yarbro • Robert Silverberg**
- **Jody Lynn Nye • William R. Forstchen**

POCKET BOOKS

SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERACTIVE

Shattered Light , the original paperback fantasy series, is also available from Pocket Books

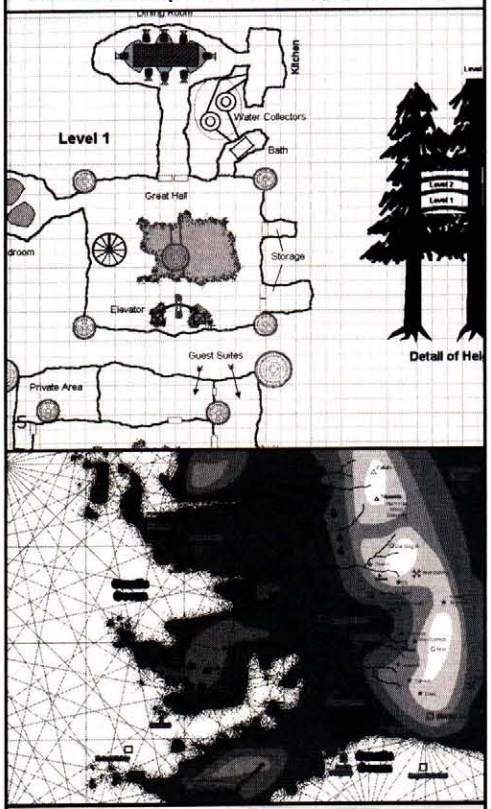
Visit **www.shatteredlight.com**

CAVEDOG

AutoREALM is designed for you to make quality role-playing maps quickly and easily!

- Fractal Lines & Curves
- RPG Measurement Scales
- Random Name Generation
- Dungeon & Campaign Icons
- Glyph Line Styles
- Overlays with Color-Coded Viewing
- Curve-fitted text
- Chart Navigation Rosettes
- Hex/Square/Triangle grids

AutoREALM requires Windows 95, 98, or NT 4.0



AutoREALM is US$35.00 (£23.00)

To order, send your check or money order to:
Andy Gryc Software
2965 Baylor Drive
Boulder, CO 80303 USA

For Visa/Mastercard Orders, call:
(541) 928-5259 (Everett Kaser Software)

http://www.iex.net/~gryc
gryc@iex.net

Would an earth elemental be turned to stone if hit by a *petrification* spell or gaze attack? I assume that, being earth- and stone-based, it would be immune or possibly slowed by such attacks, but not petrified.

Earth elementals have no immunity to petrification attacks (though giving them such an immunity would be OK as a house rule). If they fail their saving throws against petrification effects, they become lumps of inert stone, just as other creatures do.

When using the fatigue rules in the *Combat & Tactics* book, do you deduct 2 fatigue points from a character who makes 2 attacks in one round? What about spellcasters? Do they lose fatigue points from casting spells? What about missile attacks and hurled weapons? Is it 1 fatigue point per missile? Do you also deduct for special attacks like disarming, parrying, overbearing, and grabbing?

Yes to all of these. Note that characters are supposed to gain 1 fatigue point per level, plus the base value for their hit dice, not just the base value of their hit dice. (This is an official correction to the fatigue rules on page 28.)

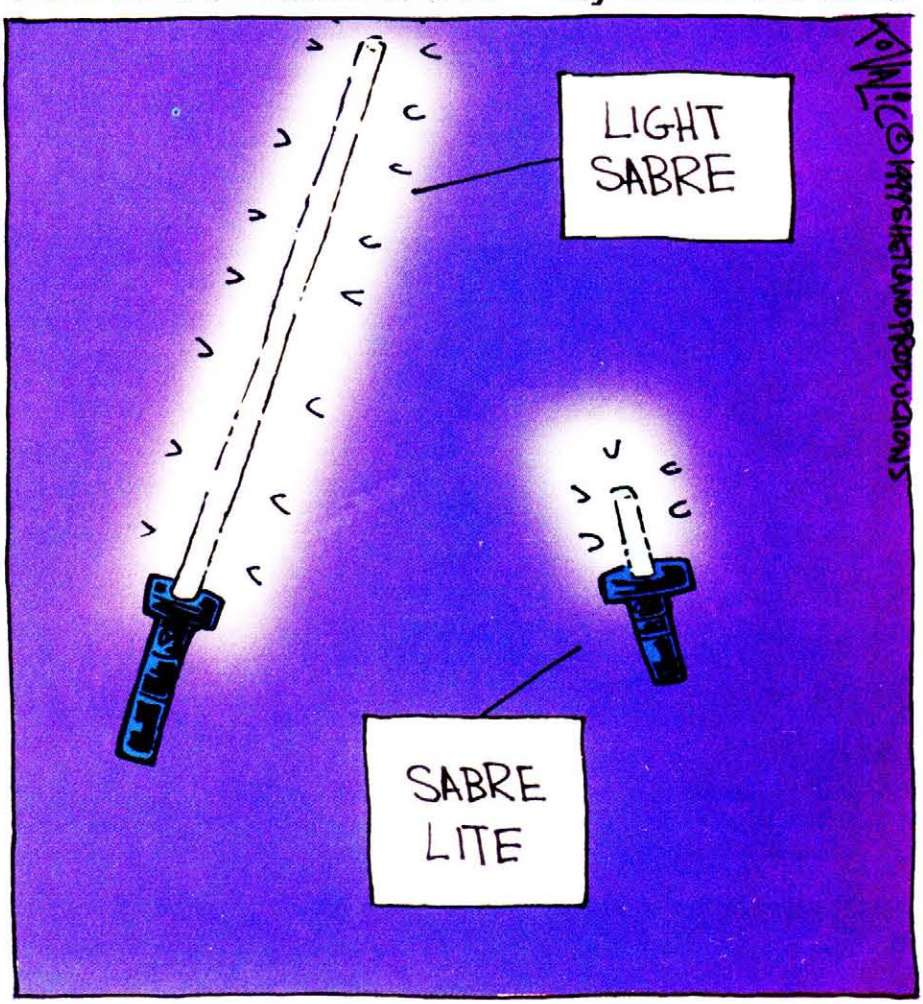
Exactly what does it mean when an evil priest gets a "T" or "D" result when turning a paladin? Is the paladin turned or commanded? Does a successful turn allow an evil priest to turn 2d6 paladins or just one?

A successful turning attempt against a paladin is always a turn result; paladins are never controlled or destroyed.

A successful turn attempt affects 2d6 paladins unless the chart shows a D*, in which case the priest turns 2d6 + 2d4 paladins. Note that priests turn paladins as through the priests were three levels lower than they actually are.

Skip Williams notes that it is bad form to tease your group's paladin when he or she has been turned by an evil priest, though Skip also admits that it's fun.

The Unspeakable Oaf by John Kovalic



WANDERING MONSTERS HEADED YOUR WAY

Anniversary Tour, Silver

Climate/Terrain: Game stores
Frequency: Rare
Treasure: See below
No. Appearing: 10 stops across the country
XP Value: Immeasurable

Warning: A horde of TSR® staff, game designers, and authors are headed to a bookstore near you.

They call themselves "The TSR Silver Anniversary Tour," but don't be fooled. They have every intention of handing out prizes, hosting free roleplaying tournaments, and demoing upcoming releases.

If you encounter this group, your best tactic is to engage them immediately and challenge them to a trivia contest. It is rumored that those who win receive even more prizes. Perhaps even a $100 gift certificate.

The TSR Silver Anniversary Tour is coming. Brace for a charge.

Date	Location	Store
7/10	Spokane, WA	Hastings Books, Video & Music
7/17	Los Angeles, CA	Waldenbooks
7/24	San Diego, CA	B. Dalton Booksellers
7/31	College Station, TX	Hastings Books, Video & Music
8/14	Omaha, NE	Borders Books
8/21	Novi (Detroit), MI	Borders Books
8/28	Columbus, OH	Media Play
9/4	Waterford, CT	Waldenbooks
9/11	Richmond, VA	B. Dalton Booksellers
9/18	Charlotte, NC	Media Play

To find the specific store location for the Silver Anniversary Tour stop nearest you, go to <www.wizards.com> or call (800) 324-6496.

Dungeons & Dragons®

TIME TO PLAY.

TSR, Dungeons & Dragons, and the Silver Anniversary logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

With its colossal giants, gargantuan dragons, and towering barbarians, the traditional fantasy world is big. On the other hand, diminutive heroes from Tolkien's hobbits to *The Complete Book of Humanoids*' fremlins prove that you don't have to be large to be important.

The *Monstrous Manual*™ book and its companion volumes are full of humanoids who might appear insignificant compared to their larger companions but who are just as capable of heroic deeds. Halflings, gnomes, bullywugs, fremlins, goblins, kobolds, pixies, and flyer saurials have all been presented as player characters already. Other diminutive races suitable as PCs include buckawn, chitines, grippli, ravenkin, and tasloi. Each of these races is detailed below, in the same format used in *The Complete Book of Humanoids*. (Additionally, the jermlaine are presented as PCs in Roger Moore's "Legacies of the Suel Imperium," in *Dragon*® *Magazine* issue #241.) Like all humanoid characters (as opposed to humans and demihumans), members of these races face prejudice as well as physical limitations when interacting with the larger races. They are also shackled by superstitions that can hinder their ability to function normally in an adventuring context.

Buckawn

Buckawn appear in the *Greyhawk*® *Monstrous Compendium*® *Appendix*.

Ability Score Adjustments. Buckawn are nimble creatures, gaining a +2 bonus to their Dexterity scores. Their diminutive stature imposes a –1 penalty to their Strength and Constitution scores, however.

Ability Score Range

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	3	15
Dexterity	12	20
Constitution	3	16
Intelligence	5	18
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	3	18

Class Restrictions

Class	Max. Level
Warrior	
Fighter	8
Rogue	
Thief	12

Buckawn may multiclass as fighter/thieves.

Hit Dice. Player character buckawn receive Hit Dice by class.

Alignment. Buckawn tend toward neutrality. Player character buckawn may be of any alignment.

Natural Armor Class. 7. (Buckawns' high Dexterity scores account for their listed AC of 3.)

Base Movement Rate. 12.

Background. Buckawn are a reclusive race of brownies, much more xenophobic and dangerous than their cousins. Native to the world of Oerth (the Greyhawk campaign setting), buckawn dwell in sylvan woodlands—indeed, their life force is tied to their forest homes. When their native woods prosper, the buckawn reflect this life in their own energy and vitality. On the other hand, when their forests suffer from sickness or heavy cutting, the buckawn sicken and die.

Buckawn are tiny humanoids, standing about 2 feet tall on average. Like other brownies, they have elfin features: long, pointed ears, arching eyebrows, and high cheekbones. Their skin is dark tan to brown, while their hair is light brown, blond, or white in older individuals. They wear simple country clothes in earthen tones, and they wield knives and darts in combat. They have finely honed senses, much keener than the human norm.

Buckawn live in insular clans, a single clan sharing a home carved into the base of a large tree. The clan members divide the domestic responsibilities of hunting small game, gathering fruits and nuts, and keeping up the home. They shun contact with other races and even distrust buckawn from other clans. They do not hesitate to resort to violence in dealing with intruders, when circumstances demand it.

Languages. Brownie, Pixie, Sprite, Nymph, Satyr, Common.

Roleplaying Suggestions. Most buckawn stick to their clans and pay little attention to the rest of the world, except as it intrudes upon their day-to-day lives or the well-being of their woodlands. A few are capable of seeing the bigger picture of life beyond their sylvan homes and choose to take a more active role in protecting the forests, fighting those who would destroy them, or pursuing other goals. Such adventurous buckawn feel most at home in a group of their own kind or a party made up of other sylvan creatures, such as satyrs, pixies, centaurs (all described in *The Complete Book of Humanoids*), and grugach (see below).

While some big folk might consider buckawn to be as "cute" as their brownie kin, buckawn have a hard edge that makes them at once more serious

Half-Pint Heroes

by James Wyatt

illustrated by Jim Holloway

and more dangerous than most other sylvan races. Like nature itself, they can react to a disturbance with surprising violence, and their poisons are among the deadliest known. Some brownies suggest that buckawn are as venomous as their darts and knives.

Special Advantages. Buckawn are both dexterous and highly magical. Their dexterity allows them to Hide in Shadows and Move Silently, even if they are not thieves. Nonthief buckawn have a 20% chance to perform either feat, modified for armor and Dexterity. Buckawn thieves receive a +20% bonus to their Hide in Shadows and Move Silently skills, again modified for armor and Dexterity, and they may improve their skills with points assigned during character creation or acquired as the character advances in level.

Buckawn have extremely keen senses. All buckawn have a base chance of 15% to Detect Noise as a thief, and buckawn thieves, again, can increase that chance. They have as keen a sense of smell as a bloodhound. They have infravision to a range of 60 feet and can see 1½ times as far as other races. When in their natural surroundings, buckawn gain a +3 bonus to their surprise rolls; outside their native woodlands, this bonus drops to +1. Buckawn always enjoy a saving throw vs. spell to determine whether they can detect an invisible character or creature nearby. If they do detect such a creature, they can attack without penalty.

All buckawn can use the following spell-like abilities at will: *audible glamer, change self, dancing lights,* and *invisibility.* At 3rd level, and every other level thereafter (5th, 7th, and 9th), they gain one of the following additional abilities, usable once per day: *entangle, pass without trace, summon insects,* and *trip.*

Buckawn have innate magic resistance of 10%.

Special Disadvantages. Buckawns' keen senses make them particularly susceptible to attacks against those senses, such as *light* spells or a troglodyte's odor. Against such attacks, a buckawn makes all saving throws with a –2 penalty.

Buckawn fighters use the level advancement charts of paladins, while buckawn thieves advance as clerics. Furthermore, they do not gain experience point bonuses for high ability scores.

Because of their natural attachment to their forests, buckawn may grow ill if their homes are threatened. The specifics of this effect are left to the DM to adjudicate; suggested effects include lowered ability scores, loss of levels, and loss of magical abilities. Buckawn gain no additional benefits when their woodlands are healthy.

Monstrous Traits. Size, xenophobic personality.

Superstitions. Buckawn find omens, good and bad, in the way that plants, mosses, and fungi grow in the woodlands. They fear fire and lightning storms, as these can destroy their homes.

Weapon Proficiencies: Buckawns' tiny size means that they can use only tiny-sized weapons in one hand, or small-sized weapons in two hands. Buckawn knives inflict 1d2 points of damage, while their darts cause 1d3 points of damage. They often poison their weapons, however.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Alertness, Animal Handling (chipmunks or squirrels), Animal Lore, Animal Noise, Artistic Ability, Brewing, Cobbling, Cooking, Dancing, Danger Sense, Direction Dense, Drinking, Eating, Hiding, Hunting, Leatherworking, Observation, Seamstress/Tailor, Set Snares, Tracking, Weather Sense, Whistling/Humming.

Available Kits: (Warrior) tribal defender, sellsword; (rogue) scavenger, tunnel rat.

Average Height and Weight: *Height:* 20/19 + 2d4. *Weight:* 20/18 + 3d4.

Age: *Starting Age:* 100 + 5d6. *Maximum Age Range:* 200 + 2d100. *Average Maximum Age:* 300 years. *Middle Age:* 100 years. *Old Age:* 133 years. *Venerable:* 200 years.

Thieving Skill Adjustments: PP +5, OL –10, F/RT —, MS +20, HS +20, DN +15, CW —, RL —.

Chitine

Chitines are described in the *Monstrous Compendium Annual, Volume One.*

Ability Score Adjustments. Chitines are agile and hardy, receiving a +1 bonus to their Dexterity and Constitution scores. Most other races consider them repulsive, so they suffer a –2 penalty to their Charisma scores.

Ability Score Range

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	6	18
Dexterity	8	19
Constitution	7	19
Intelligence	8	18
Wisdom	6	18
Charisma	3	16

Class Restrictions

Class	Max. Level
Warrior	
Fighter	12
Rogue	
Thief	15

Chitines may be multiclassed fighter/thieves. Note that while chitine communities do have priestesses, these creatures belong to a different race that is not available to PCs.

Hit Dice. Player character chitines receive Hit Dice by class.

Alignment. Chitines tend toward lawful evil. PC chitines may be of any alignment.

Natural Armor Class. 9.

Base Movement Rate. 12, web 9.

Background. Chitines are four-armed humanoids that bear an uncomfortable resemblance to spiders. In fact, they were created by the drow as experiments, and they continue to worship the drow goddess Lolth. Their four spindly arms are long and have an extra joint, allowing them a greater range of motion than most humanoids' arms. Their faces are humanlike, but their eyes are faceted, and mandibles jut from their mouths.

An average chitine stands about 4 feet tall, with mottled gray skin and stringy black hair growing in a tangle from its head and down its back. Chitines secrete an oil that keeps them from becoming stuck in their own webs. Their palms and feet are covered with hooks that allow them to climb up walls and across ceilings. They spin sticky webs from an aperture in their bellies and use this webbing as a construction material for homes, traps, and even armor.

Like spiders, chitines eat practically anything that moves. They live to an average age of 150 years.

Languages. Drow, Underdark Common, Svirfneblin, Duergar, other Underdark tongues.

Roleplaying Suggestions. Chitines rarely leave their tribal communities and almost never venture above ground. Extraordinary circumstances sometimes produce chitine adventurers, but the chitines are an extraordinary race. They are the result of a failed drow experiment—and many among them have left their communities to discover the true circumstances surrounding that experiment. Other adventurers find that a quest to destroy the drow makes them allies of good-aligned creatures. They are also dedicated servants of the spider goddess, Lolth. Chitines who, for one reason or another, refuse to serve Lolth are outcast from their homeland, and such individuals often take up a life of adventuring.

Chitines are much more accustomed to thinking in three dimensions than most land-dwellers. Chitine adventurers sometimes try to lead their non-chitine companions right up the side of a wall, forgetting that other races cannot climb so easily.

Special Advantages. Chitines can move up or down walls, or even across ceilings, at their full normal movement rate. Only in extreme conditions (very slippery or icy walls, for example) do they have any chance of falling; chitines have a base climbing success rate of 120%, with other modifiers from the *Player's Handbook* (Table 66) applied as appropriate.

Chitines can also move through webbing at a movement rate of 9. Their skin secretes an oil that prevents them from becoming entangled in their own webs. Chitines automatically make their saving throws (if one is permitted) to avoid becoming entangled in other webs, including those spun by a giant spider or those created with a *web* spell. If no saving throw is normally allowed, chitine characters can still attempt a saving throw vs. paralyzation with a +4 bonus to avoid entanglement in the web.

Chitines spin webs as spiders do, and some chitines can form this webbing into weapons, armor, or building material by hardening it through an unknown process. Chitines do not automatically possess any craft proficiencies that allow such construction, but a chitine with an appropriate proficiency (Carpenter, Blacksmith, Weaponsmith, or Armorer) is never lacking in raw materials. (At the DM's option, the hardening process may require unusual substances.) Chitines can spin 1 foot of webbing per round. Like spiders, they can use their web strands to prevent a hard fall.

Chitines have four arms and can wield weapons in all four if they desire. They can use as many as three weapons with no penalty, and can add a shield in their fourth arm without hindrance. If a chitine chooses to wield a weapon in all four arms at once, each attack is made with a –1 penalty.

Special Disadvantages. Chitines are sensitive to sunlight and suffer a –1 penalty to their attack and damage rolls in bright light.

Monstrous Traits. Appearance, suck fluids from food, webs.

Superstitions. Chitines hate and fear the drow and driders, but they look for signs of Lolth's favor in spider behavior. They also fear the sun and bright light.

Weapon Proficiencies: Javelin, Shortsword, Dagger, Knife.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Alertness, Appraising, Armorer*, Artistic Ability, Blacksmithing*, Carpentry*, Close-quarter Fighting, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Fast-talking, Fishing, Fortune Telling, Gaming, Hiding, Hunting, Juggling, Jumping, Local History, Looting, Mining, Observation, Rope Use, Seamstress/Tailor, Set Snares, Stonemasonry*, Tightrope Walking, Tumbling, Weaponsmithing*, Weaving*. Proficiencies marked with an asterisk (*) indicate skills for which chitines use hardened webbing as the raw materials.

Available Kits: (Warrior) tribal defender, mine rowdy, pit fighter, sellsword; (rogue) scavenger, tunnel rat, shadow.

Average Height and Weight: *Height:* 41/41 + 2d6. *Weight:* 65 + 5d4.

Age: *Starting Age:* 20 + 3d4. *Maximum Age Range:* 100 + 1d100. *Average Maximum Age:* 150 years. *Middle Age:* 50 years. *Old Age:* 67 years. *Venerable:* 100 years.

Thieving Skill Adjustments: PP –5, OL –5, F/RT +10, MS —, HS —, DN +5, CW +80, RL —.

Grippli

Ability Score Adjustments. Grippli are very intelligent (receiving a +1 bonus to their Intelligence scores) but socially backward and unattractive to other races (–1 to Charisma).

Ability Score Range

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	3	16
Dexterity	8	18
Constitution	3	18
Intelligence	8	18
Wisdom	6	18
Charisma	3	16

Class Restrictions

Class	Max. Level
Warrior	
Fighter	8
Ranger	9
Priest	
Shaman	7
Rogue	
Thief	10

Grippli may multiclass as fighter/shamans, ranger/shamans, fighter/thieves, or ranger/thieves.

Hit Dice. Player character grippli receive Hit Dice by class.

Alignment. Grippli tend toward neutrality. Player character grippli may be of any alignment.

Natural Armor Class. 9

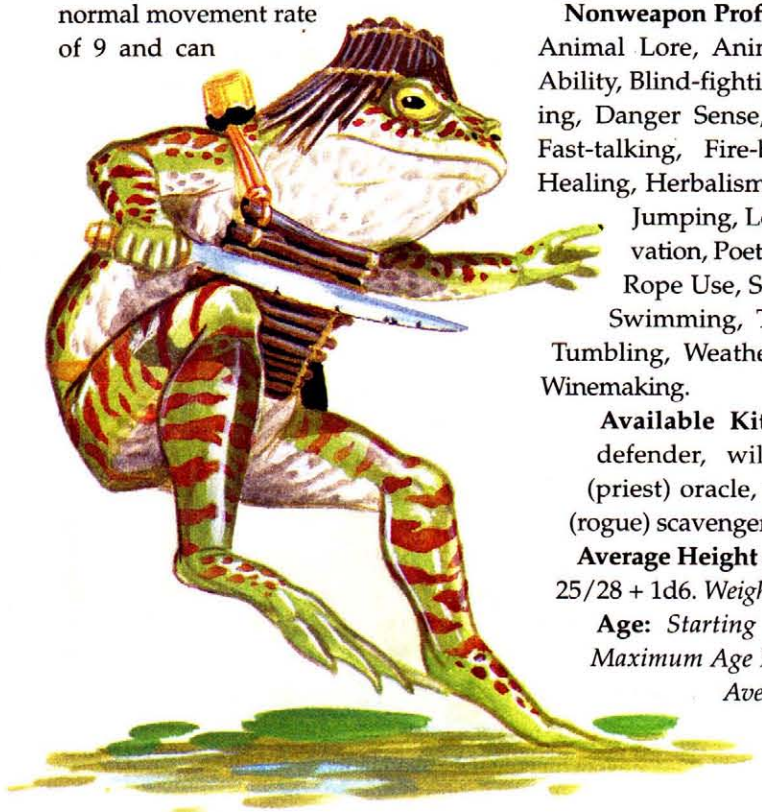
Base Movement Rate. 9, leap 15.

Background. Grippli are amphibious humanoids resembling the tree frogs that are so common in their native jungles. They average only 2½ feet tall, weighing somewhere around 30 pounds. Except for their dexterous hands and prehensile feet, grippli look very much like large frogs. They have gray-green skin mottled and striped with darker greens and browns. Grippli society is primitive but peaceful by human standards. They live in tribal villages built of wooden and mud-brick houses on tropical jungle floors.

Languages. Grippli, Common, Elvish, Tasloi, Yuan-ti, other jungle humanoids. When speaking languages other than their own, grippli can be very difficult to understand because of the croaking resonances in their speech.

Roleplaying Suggestions. Grippli tend to be nonaggressive and shy. They are a primitive tribal race and can be motivated to adventure in many of the same ways as tribal humans. Adventuring grippli characters might be on a quest on behalf of their dwindling tribes, or perhaps outcast from their tribes for some reason. They may also simply be curious and inquisitive individuals who fell in with a group of adventuring humans and demihumans who encountered them in the jungle.

Special Advantages. Grippli can climb trees and non-sheer rock at their normal movement rate of 9 and can leap with a movement rate of 15. Grippli can jump twice as far as other characters. When climbing, grippli have a base 100% chance of success, modified as appropriate for conditions and encumbrance. Grippli thieves gain +60% to their Climb Walls ability.



Grippli are well camouflaged in their native jungle environment, and when alone or in a group made up entirely of grippli or other quiet races (including halflings, elves, jermlaine, and tasloi), they impose a –3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls. Grippli have infravision to 30 feet.

Special Disadvantages. Grippli do not wear armor, and they do not manufacture metal items. When a grippli character is first created, the PC may possess no more than one metal item (no longer than a size M weapon), which is assumed to be an item acquired through trade with other races. The rest of a grippli's equipment must be appropriate for a Stone Age level of technology.

Monstrous Traits. Monstrous appearance, bestial odor (old, wet vegetation).

Superstitions. Grippli fear snakes and spiders, and gods with these features figure prominently in their myth and superstition.

Weapon Proficiencies: Dart, Net, Shortsword, Dagger, Knife, Javelin, Spear, Blowgun.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Alertness, Animal Lore, Animal Noise, Artistic Ability, Blind-fighting, Cooking, Dancing, Danger Sense, Drinking, Eating, Fast-talking, Fire-building, Gaming, Healing, Herbalism, Hiding, Hunting, Jumping, Local History, Observation, Poetry, Pottery, Religion, Rope Use, Set Snares, Survival, Swimming, Tightrope Walking, Tumbling, Weather Sense, Weaving, Winemaking.

Available Kits: (Warrior) tribal defender, wilderness protector, (priest) oracle, wandering mystic, (rogue) scavenger.

Average Height and Weight: *Height:* 25/28 + 1d6. *Weight:* 23/25 + 1d6.

Age: *Starting Age:* 100 + 2d20. *Maximum Age Range:* 600 + 2d100. *Average Maximum Age:* 701 years. *Middle Age:* 300 years. *Old Age:* 400 years. *Venerable:* 600 years.

Thieving Skill Adjustments: PP +5, OL –10, F/RT —, MS +5, HS +10, DN –5, CW +60, RL –15.

Ravenkin

Ravenkin are avian humanoids native to the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting and are described fully in the *RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix I.*

Ability Score Adjustments. Ravenkin are highly intelligent, gaining a +2 bonus to their Intelligence scores. However, their small size and light bones give them a –1 penalty to their Strength and Constitution scores.

Ability Score Range

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	3	17
Dexterity	8	18
Constitution	3	17
Intelligence	10	19
Wisdom	8	18
Charisma	3	18

Class Restrictions

Class	Max. Level
Warrior	
Fighter	11
Ranger	10
Priest	
Cleric	7
Wizard	
Mage	9
Rogue	
Thief	12

Ravenkin may multiclass as fighter/mages, ranger/mages, fighter/thieves, ranger/thieves, or mage/thieves.

Hit Dice. Player character ravenkin receive Hit Dice by class.

Alignment. Ravenkin tend toward neutral good. PC ravenkin may be of any alignment.

Natural Armor Class. 6. Ravenkin cannot wear armor.

Base Movement Rate. 3, fly 27 (C).

Background. Ravenkin are found primarily in the Demiplane of Dread (Ravenloft), though it is likely they originated elsewhere, probably on Oerth. They look like exceptionally large ravens, with a wingspan of 5 feet, but they ornament themselves with jewelry to distinguish themselves from common

birds. They can manipulate items in their claws and even hold a weapon. They eat insects, berries, and carrion. They can live over one hundred years, and an individual's age is used as a title with his name, such as "Kareeka Twomoons" or "Shreeaka Fiftyautumns."

Most ravenkin have limited spell-using ability, but PCs who become warriors or rogues must give up that ability to advance in their chosen professions.

Languages. Ravenkin, Common. Ravenkin can also communicate with normal crows and ravens, which allows them to gather information about the movements of evil in the land.

Roleplaying Suggestions. Ravenkin are devoted to the struggle against evil in the dark domains of Ravenloft. While they keep to themselves and show little trust toward other races, they are valuable allies and unwavering friends once their trust is won. When the situation demands it, there is always a handful of ravenkin willing to leave nest and family behind to join a momentous quest against some evil threat.

Though they are not mighty warriors, ravenkin show a ferocity and dedication in combat that is formidable to many larger races. They fight courageously, valuing the lives of others above their own.

Special Advantages. Ravenkin can fly at a movement rate of 27, with a maneuverability class of C. They are very slow on the ground, moving at a rate of 3.

Ravenkin can attack with their beaks, inflicting only 1d3 points of damage but hitting an opponent's eye on a natural roll of 19 or 20. Such a hit blinds the affected eye, causing the opponent to attack at –2 until the eye is healed with a *heal* or *regeneration* spell. A second eye hit completely blinds the opponent. Strength bonuses to hit and damage do not apply to beak attacks.

Ravenkin can also use weapons in their claws. A ravenkin can wield a small weapon in one claw or a medium weapon in two.

The keen senses of the ravenkin give them a +2 bonus to their surprise rolls.

Special Disadvantages. Because of the awkwardness of using a weapon in both claws, ravenkin attacking with a medium-sized weapon suffer a –2 penalty. Ravenkin cannot use large weapons. They cannot use bows, crossbows, or other weapons that require two hands, and they cannot throw weapons effectively.

Monstrous Traits. Appearance, carrion diet.

Superstitions. Ravenkin show little fear in the face of Ravenloft's numerous horrors, but they are particularly superstitious about atmospheric phenomena involving the moon—such as halos or rainbows around the moon.

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Knife, Javelin.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Alertness, Ancient History, Animal Training (crows and ravens), Appraising, Artistic Ability (jewelry), Astrology, Blindfighting, Chanting, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Etiquette, Gaming, Gem Cutting, Healing, Hiding, Information Gathering, Local History, Natural Fighting, Observation, Poetry, Reading/Writing, Reading Lips, Religion, Spellcraft, Ventriloquism, Voice Mimicry, Weather Sense.

Available Kits: (Warrior) tribal defender, pit fighter, sellsword, wilderness protector, (wizard) hedge wizard, humanoid scholar, (priest) oracle, wandering mystic, (rogue) scavenger, shadow.

Average Height and Weight: *Height:* 44/42 + 1d6. *Weight:* 45/40 + 2d6

Age: *Starting Age:* 20 + 1d4. *Maximum Age Range:* 125 + 3d20. *Average Maximum Age:* 157 years. *Middle Age:* 62 years. *Old Age:* 83 years. *Venerable:* 125 years.

Thieving Skill Adjustments: PP –10, OL –10, F/RT —, MS +5, HS +5, DN +10, CW —, RL +5.

Tasloi

Ability Score Adjustments. Tasloi are quick, nimble, and stealthy, gaining a +2 bonus to their Dexterity scores. They are small and somewhat dim-witted, however, suffering a –1 penalty to Strength and Intelligence.

Ability Score Range

Ability	Min.	Max.
Strength	3	17
Dexterity	10	19
Constitution	3	18
Intelligence	3	17
Wisdom	3	18
Charisma	3	17

Class Restrictions

Class	Max. Level
Warrior	
Fighter	12
Priest	
Shaman	5
Rogue	
Thief	15

Tasloi may multiclass as fighter/thieves.

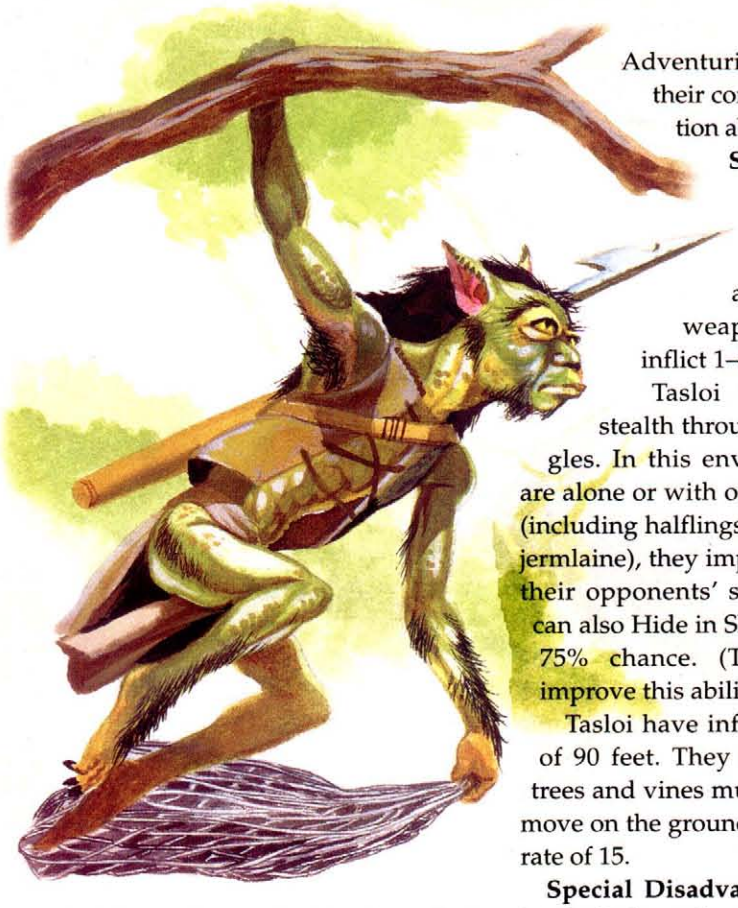
Hit Dice. Player character tasloi gain Hit Dice by class.

Alignment. Tasloi tend toward chaotic evil. PC tasloi can be of any nonlawful alignment.

Natural Armor Class. 6.

Base Movement Rate. 9, climb 15.

Background. Tasloi are small jungle-dwelling humanoids that resemble tiny apes. Their foreheads are sharply sloped, and their arms reach to the ground as they walk—though they move more quickly and gracefully by swinging in the branches of trees. Their skins are gleaming green, with sparse



black hair all over their bodies. Their golden eyes resemble a cat's. Their voices are high and whispery.

Tasloi live in large bands, their large numbers making them far more dangerous than they could ever be alone. They are primitive hunters and gatherers, supplementing their existence by raiding other jungle races and the occasional travelers through their domains. They eat about anything they can find, but they have a marked taste for human and elven flesh.

Languages. Tasloi, Monkeys and Apes, Pidgin Common.

Roleplaying Suggestions. Tasloi are firm believers in the principle of strength through numbers. As chaotic evil creatures they do not have a cohesive social order, but they work effectively as a pack, relying on sheer numbers and sneak attacks to bring down victims they might never otherwise defeat. They believe firmly in the right of each individual to do exactly what he wants, but the best way to avoid retribution while doing exactly what you want is to find a group of friends—the larger the better—to do it with you. Even tasloi who manage to squelch their evil natures still feel most comfortable as part of a pack. Adventuring tasloi think of their companions as protection above all else.

Special Advantages. Tasloi have sharp claws, allowing them two natural attacks in place of weapons. Their claws inflict 1–3 points of damage. Tasloi move with great stealth through their native jungles. In this environment, if tasloi are alone or with other quiet creatures (including halflings, elves, grippli, and jermlaine), they impose a –4 penalty to their opponents' surprise rolls. They can also Hide in Shadows with a base 75% chance. (Tasloi thieves can improve this ability.)

Tasloi have infravision to a range of 90 feet. They can climb through trees and vines much faster than they move on the ground, with a movement rate of 15.

Special Disadvantages. Tasloi hate bright light and suffer a –1 penalty to their attack rolls in daylight conditions. They are slow and clumsy on the ground, moving at a rate of 9 and gaining no benefits for stealth.

Monstrous Traits. Appearance.

Superstitions. In an environment filled with dangerous predators, tasloi survive because of their tribal society and pack tactics. As a result, tasloi fear being alone and reinforce that fear through superstition. They also hold strong superstitions about certain sites in their jungles, particularly ancient ruins.

Weapon Proficiencies: Javelin, Club, Shortsword, Net, Lasso.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Alertness, Animal Lore, Animal Noise, Animal Training (spiders and wasps), Blindfighting, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Eating, Endurance, Fire-building, Fishing, Herbalism, Hiding, Hunting, Jumping, Local History, Looting, Natural Fighting, Observation, Religion, Airborne Riding (giant wasp), Rope Use, Set Snares, Survival, Tightrope Walking, Tracking, Tumbling, Ventriloquism, Voice Mimicry, Weather Sense, Wild Fighting.

Available Kits: (Warrior) tribal defender, pit fighter, sellsword, (priest) shaman, (rogue) scavenger, shadow.

Average Height and Weight: *Height:* 24/24 + 1d12. *Weight:* 30/30 + 4d4.

Age: *Starting Age:* 15 + 1d4. *Maximum Age Range:* 75 + 2d20. *Average Maximum Age:* 95 years. *Middle Age:* 37 years. *Old Age:* 50 years. *Venerable:* 75 years.

Thieving Skill Adjustments: PP —, OL –10, F/RT –5, MS +5, HS +70, DN +5, CW +25, RL –10.

James would love to fling himself from tree to tree like a tasloi, but he likes the chitine's extra arms even more.

no. 2 SOLUTION

Red letters are for horizontal words, and green ones are for vertical words. Start at the alignment and read away from it one letter per square to find each monster.

	LG	LG	NG	NG	CG	CG	
LG	I A H	T N D	N N N	T U I	W J T	N R D	CG
LG	O C S	L L O	O E U	R A T	T N R	M E L	CG
LN	A U W	E O R	C W K	I A O	N E A	E E D	CN
LN	L I D	W B X	A A A	U T B	A A L	T I N	CN
LE	G E I	A E O	H B R	R A O	I N E	R S T	CE
LE	T I M	K K T	N K O	N A O	U G T	D S Y	CE
	LE	LE	NE	NE	CE	CE	

HORIZONTAL:	VERTICAL:
DJINN (CG),	MEDUSA (LE),
COUATL (LG),	KOBOLD (LE),
ARCANE (LN),	KRAKEN (NE),
TABAXI (CN),	TRITON (NG),
SEA HAG (CE),	TREANT (CG),
YUAN-TI (CE)	DRIDER (CE)

Reading down by columns, the remaining black letters form the quotation from Roger Moore: **"How little we know about our own alignments."**

TNC UNIVERSE

941-927-8398 fax 941-927-9495
6113 Clark Center Avenue
Sarasota, FL 34238 USA

Your One-Stop Gaming Source!
Singles, Boxes, Sets, Books, Supplies...
Price ~ Service ~ Selection

www.TNCUniverse.com

TNC HotList

MAGIC The Gathering®

WARHAMMER

WARHAMMER 40,000

STAR WARS CUSTOMIZABLE CARD GAME™

DEADLANDS

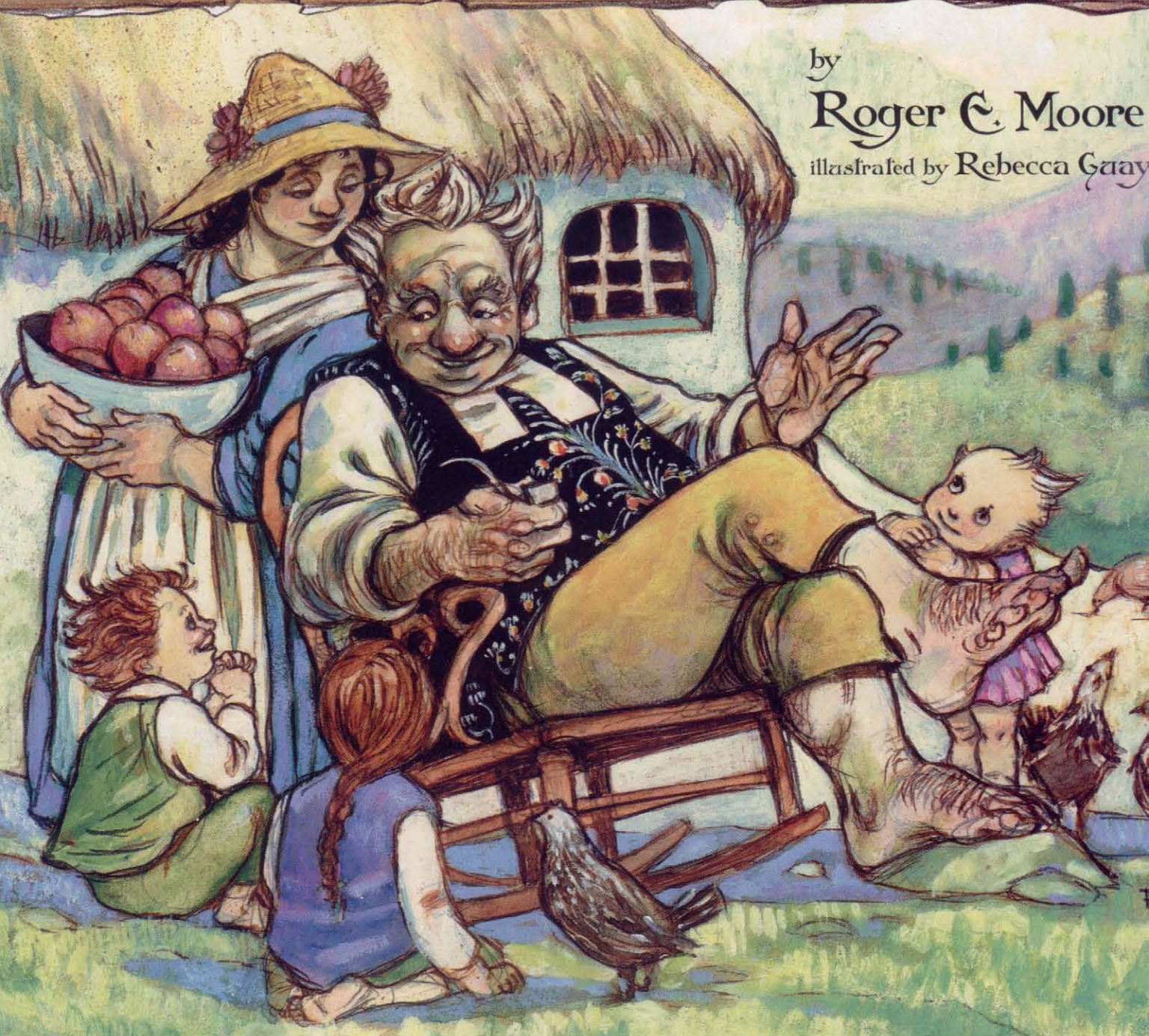
middle earth THE WIZARDS

Star Trek, BattleTech, L5R, X-Files, & more..

Worldwide Leader in ALL Popular Collectibles
Boxes, Sets, Singles, Supplies, News & Information...and more...!
Magic: TG, L5R, StarWars, Babylon5, Star Trek, Middle Earth, Doomtown...

Elmshire: A Halfling Haven

by Roger E. Moore
illustrated by Rebecca Guay



Every hero needs a place to call home. While native to the GREYHAWK® setting, the rustic town of Elmshire makes an excellent halfling town for virtually any AD&D® campaign.

The Town of Elmshire

This isolated halfling town lies on the southern coast of the Nyr Dyv's shallow Midbay arm, 12 miles east of the mouth of the Selintan River. The largest demihuman settlement within the Domain of Greyhawk, Elmshire sits near the middle of a strip of temperate, fertile grassland between the northern slopes of the Cairn Hills and the Midbay, measuring about 35 miles long east-west and up to 6 miles wide north-south. This green, rolling region, which locals call the South Shore, is dotted with the farms and herds of many dozens of halfling families, with a few gnome and human families living among them.

Elmshire appears quite different from human communities, as it is spread out and has no community core. There are few large wooden buildings like barns or inns, which humans are accustomed to seeing in villages, and even the larger structures here are widely separated. It is said that a man could walk from one end of Elmshire to the other and be only vaguely aware he has passed through a significant settlement.

Elmshire is bisected by a large stream called Green River that flows down from the Cairn Hills, forking once near the shore around a small island delta (Big Isle). A second, smaller delta (Little Isle) lies at the mouth of Eastbranch, the lesser watercourse splitting from Green River. Green River divides the town into two general districts, Westfields and Eastfields, with the farms on Big Isle forming a small third district. The Green River is roughly 30 feet wide and rarely more than 5 feet deep, and it does not appear on most maps of the area.

The land for miles around is entirely cultivated or used for pasture, except for numerous small woodlots and the sand-and-rock beach on the east side of Elmshire. Farm borders are marked by stone posts and ditches, unless ponies, sheep, goats, or cattle are kept and wooden fences are used. Most homes of the halfling population are actually underground, dug below low mounds of earth that are piled higher and made broader when the homes are constructed. A typical burrow mound measures 40–50 feet across and 5 feet high, housing beneath it a family of two to four adults and up to twice as many children. A clay or metal chimney invariably pokes up near the top of the mound, emitting blue smoke at various times of the day as one of the halflings' four or five mealtimes approaches. Some mounds are covered with ivy, herb or vegetable gardens, shrubbery, decorative stones, sculptures, or wildflowers, but many are covered with thick grass on which livestock graze. Some mounds cover underground tool sheds, chicken coops, breweries, bakeries, or food-storage cellars. Broad, low-roofed barns are uncommon but present on larger farms. Elms are the most common tree, but willows and oaks also abound.

A wide, stone-paved, well-built highway called the High Road leads down to Elmshire from the rugged Cairn Hills, connecting the town with the City of Greyhawk (about 58 miles away to the southwest) and one of its three mining communities, Steaming Springs (about 28 miles away). High Road crosses the Green River at White Bridge, a large and cleverly designed wooden structure built in 551 CY. Because of its location, White Bridge is sometimes taken to be the center of Elmshire. Four inns lie within 400 feet of it, and outdoor celebrations usually take place here by the banks of Green River. Many curved dirt paths spread out from High Road to the town's farmsteads, with short stone pillars at intersections displaying the names of the various routes. High Road is not paved beyond White Bridge; it is called Long Trail as it winds along the shoreline to the east, soon turning into a footpath and ending about 17 miles away in hilly wilderness. Several narrow paths lead into the hills from Elmshire's southernmost farms. These trails are used by hunters, goat and sheep herders, mushroom-pickers, and the occasional fortune-seeker.

> Elmshire is a quiet and largely secluded town from which occasional quests into Midbay or the Cairn Hills would be worthwhile for low- to mid-level parties visiting the area.

Along the northwestern Midbay shore, weathered wooden piers extend into the shallow waters, which are in many places covered with cattails, reeds, and other tall lakeside plants. Midbay provides fish for local dinners and for export. The shipping trade here, though minor compared to Greyhawk's, is still important to Elmshire's economy, as noted later in this article. At night, the South Shore is lit by many candles, torches, and lanterns, often used by ships on the Nyr Dyv to guide themselves toward the entrance to the Selintan farther west. This habit has persisted despite conflicts with the Rhennee, as the halflings regard their homeland as a light in the darkness of the world and feel they should show it.

History

The South Shore was probably home to nomadic bands of Flan hunters and fishers for ages. The ruins of very old gnome burrows and cottages are also found in the area, but these have little of interest to treasure hunters. The Flan and gnomes were likely chased off over six centuries ago by early Suloise settlers; these established some farms but were eventually driven off themselves by large bandit gangs around 100 CY. This fertile land was resettled in force by a large halfling family, the Hardiggins, in 335 CY. Their cluster of farms attracted many more halfling settlers from the Cairn Hills, and this spot was named Elmshire after a large grove of elms by which the Hardiggins first built their homes. (This grove exists today just beyond Westfields.)

The Cairn Hills here have little in the way of valuable metal or mineral resources, and both the Nyr Dyv and the hills have bad reputations for their inhabitants (monsters, pirates or bandits, lethal ruins, and others). These factors encouraged humans to build farms elsewhere, to the halflings' relief, and the

farms prospered. Bandits occasionally raided the area, but the farmers had little worth stealing. Moreover, the halflings became adept at scouting, setting traps and ambushes, firing missiles from cover and camouflage, and gaining forged iron and magical weaponry from Greyhawk. Having found a fertile niche in the world, the halflings were determined not to lose it.

The community prospered while Zagig Yragerne was in charge of Greyhawk, as he ignored the halflings except to have the Selintan's mouth carefully marked with buoys and lights to allow Nyr Dyv shipping to pass safely through the shallow waters of Midbay. Zagig also directed many attacks against bandits who had traditionally lurked in the Cairn Hills, and his name is revered even now among Elmshire's inhabitants. (Some of the oldest citizens here even remember seeing him personally.)

Elmshire has one historical figure of note: Pontus Hardiggin, a halfling traveler who ranged widely about the world between the years 350 and 390 CY before retiring to Elmshire to write his memoirs. *Life Afoot* is found in many libraries across the Flanaess, and it is one of the most entertaining travelogues ever written. Among other stories, some obviously fabricated, Hardiggin described a visit to a secret, idyllic land in which halflings and giants lived in peace, blessed with fertile soil, health, and a great deposit of gold, emeralds, and useful metals. Hardiggin placed this land in the Yatils, but this may have been intended as a joke or a deliberate attempt to protect the inhabitants of that happy land by misdirection. Pontus met Zagig Yragerne several times, but he privately felt the Lord Mayor was "as crazy as a Midsummer Night werewolf." A few halfling adventurers call Elmshire their home—"walking in Old Pont's footsteps," as some locals say. However, adventuring is generally regarded here as inordinately dangerous and uncomfortable.

Since Zagig's time, not much of note has occurred in this town, aside from a few notable lake monsters coming ashore or attacking ships, and a period when pirates raided the town before being crushed by warships from Furyondy (525–526 CY). Bandits are still a problem every year for outlying farms, though with the Greyhawk Militia out in force since the Greyhawk Wars, few marauders have been sighted.

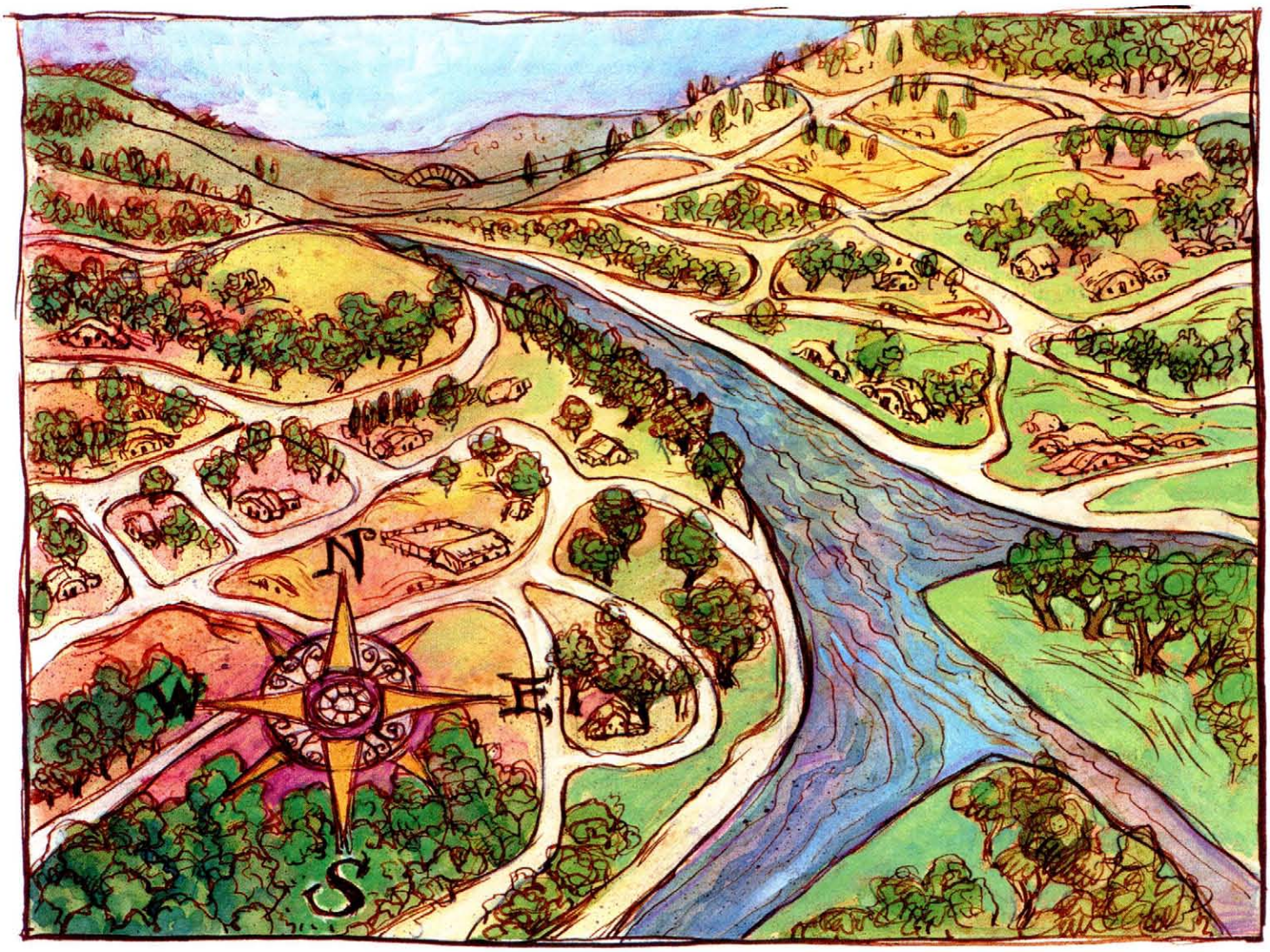
For almost a century, Elmshire has been governed by a mayor, usually a former adventurer or wealthy merchant who traveled widely beyond the town but who spent enough time in Elmshire to still be considered a trustworthy local. The mayor is elected for life but can retire or be voted out of office by a simple majority of voters. Only the town elders (the heads of each farm household) can vote; two-thirds of the elders are male. Elmshire mayors have been elected since 499 CY, one year after Greyhawk proclaimed it was a free and independent city. A total of nine mayors have served here, eight of them male or female halflings and one a male gnome, a veteran of the Hateful Wars in the Kron Hills to the west. Until recently, the town was always independent of Greyhawk's authority. The only requirement for the position of mayor is that the townsfolk have confidence in the candidate's abilities to defend and protect the region, which includes settling local disputes and making trade deals with outside groups as much as it means organizing and leading the local militia, if it must be raised.

Elmshire has no standing army, nor any defensive walls or ditches. Its militia is quite ragged in appearance. One able adult male from each household must serve in the militia, though volunteers are accepted in any number. Females may serve if they volunteer, but they are not required to serve except in grave emergencies. About 500–600 troops can be called up within a day's time, these being divided into five companies of 100–120 each and led by an experienced warrior. Every soldier has leather armor, with a leather cap or metal helmet; each also has a dagger, though a few have short swords or hand axes instead. Three companies are armed with short bows and a variety of arrows, about 20–30 per halfling. The other two companies use short spears (two-handed). Some halflings have small shields, for use if they must fight hand-to-hand with daggers, swords, and the like. The militia has been mustered a few times in the last two decades, nearly always to fight bandits from the Cairn Hills. Lately, however, it has also been called to repel Rhennee from the beaches, as well as two scrags that waded ashore from Midbay in 589 but were turned back by fire after a two-day battle. Gnomes and halflings serve equally in the militia, but the larger dwarves and humans are put in a small special unit.

The current mayor is His Honor Windsor Greenshade, a former adventurer who left Elmshire in 540 CY and returned twenty years later, wealthy but weary of the state of affairs in the world. He was elected mayor after the murder of Her Honor Marigold Runner and six other halflings and humans in 571 CY by bandits on the High Road. Mayor Greenshade successfully led the town's defense against these and other bandits until 574 CY, when the City of Greyhawk sent strong patrols through the Cairn Hills and began improving the High Road between the two communities. Greenshade personally led seven assaults on bandit lairs near Elmshire, and he is credited with killing twelve brigands and executing another dozen. He later negotiated trade deals with restaurants in the City of Greyhawk to supply them with smoked fish and goat cheese, starting the town's most recent economic boom.

Mayor Greenshade had another notable effect on Elmshire in encouraging more halflings from the Cairn Hills to come to the South Shore and join their fellows, seeking safety in numbers from brigands. The town nearly doubled in size between 571 and 582 CY because of the huge migration to the community. Food production boomed, and caravans from Greyhawk began appearing several times a week to haul away produce to feed the city's hundred legions.

By 582 CY, about 5,100 adult halflings lived here, with a smattering of gnomes and humans that the halflings found acceptable company. There were tidings of evil events across the Nyr Dyv (the return of Iuz in 570 CY, primarily, and tales of fighting between the Shield Lands and invaders from the Bandit Kingdoms and the Horned Society in 579–581 CY), but life was still good, and Elmshire was considered secure. The start of the Greyhawk Wars in the north, particularly the crushing of the Shield Lands in 583 CY, stunned everyone, but it



It is said that a man could walk from one end of Elmshire to the other and be only vaguely aware he has passed through a significant settlement.

did not change this picture of prosperity and peace.

Then a mysterious plague struck in late spring 583 CY, spreading rapidly throughout the community. The town was quarantined by the mayor, who ordered guards to turn away traffic on the High Road for two months. The plague is now generally called Yellow Eye, as one of the early symptoms of infection was a pale yellow color in the corneas. The disease had vile characteristics and caused the sufferer to lose all appetite and thirst, waste away, and die within a week. Force-feeding proved unsuccessful as a cure; magic and priests were in short supply and able to save only a handful of citizens. About a quarter of Elmshire's adult citizens died. The adult halfling population fell to 3,800 by 584 CY, but many children died of the disease as well, perhaps raising the total mortality to almost 5,000. Humans and gnomes caught Yellow Eye as well and were made ill, but none died from it. Large stone cairns now stand at the sites of seven mass graves dug in 583–584 CY, just beyond the southernmost farms.

The devastating effects of the plague extended beyond the deaths of Elmshire's residents. In addition to fears that the plague would spread to the Free City, the Directing Oligarchy of Greyhawk was concerned that the entire halfling community would collapse, leaving Greyhawk's northern border open to landings by forces allied with Iuz. The fish, cheese, wool, grain, and other produce from Elmshire were important to the city, and food riots were to be avoided at all costs.

The Oligarchy eventually worked out an agreement with Mayor Greenshade that was approved by the town elders and signed into effect in Patchwall, 583 CY. Given Elmshire's weak state, Greyhawk would provide military protection to all the South Shore, particularly Elmshire, in return for a low level of taxation. This tax is collected several times each year and shipped by guarded caravan to Greyhawk. The Oligarchs worried that the taxes would not be kept up over time, but this proved unfounded. Soldiers from the Greyhawk Militia have since been stationed here for shore patrol duty, and their presence has also lessened the number of bandit attacks in the hills to the south. The older halflings who survived the disease have not forgotten its horrors, but they almost never speak of it now. They do drink more than most halflings do, however, and are quite somber and depressed at times.

Another dramatic event marked Elmshire and damaged its hospitality. In the spring of 585 CY, about forty adult halflings disappeared in separate incidents while on guard duty along the

Midbay shoreline. An investigation by outside adventurers revealed that the guards were being drugged by a renegade halfling in league with an evil Rhennee family. These Rhennee worked for Iuz, and they took the kidnapped halflings across the Nyr Dyv to an unspeakable fate in the Empire of Iuz.

Public outcry was so intense after this incident that the normally placid nature of Elmshire's citizens was completely discarded. The Merrifoot and Proudhair families, all halflings who were involved in this vile business, were branded, beaten, and exiled as a result, their lands and possessions seized for public auction. Several members of these families now live in the Old City of Greyhawk, reportedly performing menial jobs and drinking heavily; the rest have scattered. The ringleader, Permen Merrifoot, was hanged after a trial lasting three days, and his body was burned to ashes.

The town of Elmshire then turned completely against the Rhennee. Before 580 CY, several dozen Rhennee barges were allowed to dock at Elmshire and winter over, their coins adding to the town's coffers. As Iuz spread his influence through the Rhennee, however, the bargefolk became less popular and were accused (with some good reason) of local thefts. Relations between halflings and Rhennee decayed to the point where trade between them ceased and halflings regarded the Rhennee as evil.

The kidnapping and undoubted murder of the forty guards, however, enraged the halflings beyond reason. Two Rhennee barges were attacked by missile fire as they approached Elmshire in the summer of 585, and the bargefolk have avoided the town completely since then. In 587, an attempt was made by a neutral party in Greyhawk to reconcile the two sides, but it failed miserably when Mayor Greenshade spat at the Rhennee and cursed them bitterly for the treachery of their fellows. He shouted that he would see every Rhennee who set foot on the South Shore swing dead from a tree within an hour, and the townspeople roared their approval. Matters have not improved since then. A squad of twenty-two Greyhawk Militia soldiers is now stationed here and rotated monthly, patrolling the coast on horseback. Elmshire's militia has several watchposts established, reinforced by friendly Greyhawk mercenaries hired by the wealthier halflings of the community and supplied with good armor and weapons. It is rumored that a wizard is being sought who would make Elmshire home and further aid the folk.

In 590 CY, the Association of Rafters, Freighters, and Bargemen of the Selintan was formed by workers from the Merchants' and Traders' Union. The Rafters (as this union is commonly known) was granted a monopoly on shipping big cargoes by raft, barge, or oared galley to ports along the Selintan, from Hardby to Greyhawk and to all villages between. Cargoes to and from Elmshire, on the Nyr Dyv, are included in the monopoly. This monopoly applies only if such cargoes originate within the Domain of Greyhawk, so foreign shippers can still pass through the Selintan freely, trading as they go. Though some residents of Elmshire feared the union was a ruse for Greyhawk to claim even more taxes in trade, the arrangement has worked out well for all involved. Trade has begun to rise perceptibly by water as well as land, and the feeling is that better times are around the corner.

At the present time, the population of Elmshire is just under 4,000 halfling adults, with three times as many children. Many surviving families blended after the Yellow Eye plague, and a good number of hill-dwelling halflings came to Elmshire in 586–588 CY by invitation of the mayor and elders, who gave the immigrants a chance to purchase homes and farmland left abandoned after the plague. After some debate, some southern farms in the Cairn Hills were opened for sale to landless gnomes from Greyhawk or Grossettgrottell, who gladly took the opportunity to join the town. Human settlement is not encouraged out of the (not unreasonable) fear that the larger folk will multiply and eventually find an excuse to drive out the smaller ones.

Another thousand halflings are scattered across the northern Cairn Hills, most within 20 miles of the Nyr Dyv. Perhaps three hundred of these live within 10 miles of Elmshire itself. Most halflings here are the Hairfoot sort, with a few Stouts; Tallfellow halflings are almost unknown.

Midbay & Elmshire

The Nyr Dyv, here called Midbay, is too shallow to establish a regular port for most shipping traffic. Long, rippled sandbars have formed along the lake bottom and often come within a few feet of the surface. Grounded and abandoned ships are sometimes seen here, riding just above the waves until completely wrecked by a storm. The halflings sometimes send their small boats out to rescue the crews and passengers of sailing ships and galleys stranded in this region by wind, wave, or crew error, though they are careful lest the "stranded crewmen" turn out to be pirates seeking to kill halflings for sport. Abandoned ships are immediately looted, though some cargoes are kept in Elmshire intact in case their owners in Greyhawk or elsewhere wish to recover them. An interesting underground economy has sprung up around the sale of cargo and valuables taken from shipwrecks to interested parties in Greyhawk. A few retired halfling adventurers have contacts with the Greyhawk Guild of Thieves or various city merchants, all of whom are potential buyers of stray goods.

A deep channel lies to the west, marked by colorful buoys with *continual light* spells spaced at ⅛-mile intervals to show ships the proper route to the Selintan. These buoys ("Zagig's lights"), riding in water up to 60 feet deep, are maintained by both Elmshire boaters and a small naval group of the Greyhawk Militia, jokingly called the Midbay Marines.

The halflings of Elmshire are frequently seen on Midbay, though nearly always within sight of the sandy, rocky shore. They build leather and bark canoes holding up to four crew, catching fish with nets or hooked lines. Reels are used to haul in large fish. Salt purchased from Hardby is used for packing fish for export to Greyhawk. A few halflings own flat-bottom boats or rafts using small sails, but oars are always used on canoes. The fishers have superb knowledge of the shallow waters in this area and the shipwrecks found there. Most fishers can swim, but almost none of them dive deeply.

Midbay is very shallow, which keeps much dangerous lake-life out of the region. However, some hazardous fauna

such as giant water beetles, giant crayfish, and some predatory fish still come into these waters near the South Shore. Huge aquatic ogres (merrow) are known to lurk around the eastern side of the Great South Peninsula, but they rarely come to the South Shore. Scrags—aquatic trolls—are rarely seen but much feared, as fire cannot be used against them in the lake. Most halfling boats put to sea with pitch-covered torches on them to frighten off any scrags. *Light* and *continual light* spells are less successful unless adjusted to present effects resembling actual burning flames. (Any wizard can make this adjustment to a *continual light* or *light* spell with a few days of research. The adjusted *flickering light* and *continual flickering light* spells are otherwise as normal, and can be used to fake bright torches and bonfires, respectively.)

Though Rhennee are not allowed near the South Shore, shallow-draft boats are sometimes sent over by ships anchored some distance offshore. A few merchantmen, galleys, cogs, and other ships of the Nyr Dyv trade with Elmshire for various goods, and the town has gained a larger sense of the world through this contact. Craft from the Association of Rafters, Freighters, and Bargemen of the Selintan also dock here, hauling goods to and from points within Greyhawk's domain. The treacherous waters here ensure that Elmshire will never be a major port on the Nyr Dyv, but in many ways that is fine with its inhabitants.

Where the Money Comes & Goes

A significant amount of gold is brought in to Elmshire annually from wool sales to Greyhawk's recently formed Guild of Clothworkers. (See *The Adventure Begins*, page 115.) This trade is picking up with the discovery of some unusual sheep and goats in the Cairn Hills; the animals are being bred and sheared now on a few of Elmshire's farms. Fishing is another source of income for Elmshire. The locals also produce excellent baked goods and cheeses, and several families are noted brewers and leatherworkers. (These last two groups exist on the western edge of town, where the smell doesn't bother anyone else.) Smokeweed, a yellow broadleaf plant, is harvested in the fall for sale as pipe tobacco.

Most halflings are the Hairfoot sort, with a few Stouts. Tallfellow halflings are almost unknown in Elmshire.

The lion's share of export money, however, comes from grain sales to Greyhawk's Guild of Bakers, Cooks, and Millers (for bread), and to the Guild of Ostlers and Brewers (for brewing). Wheat, rye, oats, and barley are the bedrock of Elmshire farm produce, and many wagon loads head south at harvest time. Elmshire has almost never suffered from grain blight, thanks to its dedicated clergy and the blessings and spells they cast over their fields.

Another major source of income comes from well-to-do expatriates in the City of Greyhawk who send part of their salaries home to their families. Several dozen young halflings work with the Guild of Bakers, Cooks, and Millers. Other halflings prefer working at the Ostlers' and Brewers' Guild, or the Guild of Leatherworkers and Tanners. Well-to-do halflings are found in the Merchants' and Traders' Union, the Union of Moneychangers and Pawnbrokers, and the Guild of Lawyers, Scribes, and Accountants. (About half of Elmshire's mayors belonged to one of the latter three guilds at some time.) Additionally, a few halflings who have joined the Thieves' Guild of Greyhawk support Elmshire in various ways.

It's not uncommon for an Elmshire halfling to travel to Greyhawk and work there for several years, often up to a decade or two, in an attempt to make a fortune. It is said that a third of the population of Elmshire can't wait to go to Greyhawk, a third is already there, and a third has come home and has no intention of ever going back to that "hard city." Halflings make up about 2.5% of the population of Greyhawk (about 1,700 individuals), by the 590 CY census. Most halflings in this big city make their homes in the Burrow Heights neighborhood of the Foreign Quarter. Among the items that Elmshire imports are forged steel and iron weapons, tools, and armor, which are highly valued as the locals are not expert blacksmiths and no sources of iron lie nearby. Clothing is also eagerly sought, and some merchants in Greyhawk create clothing exclusively in halflings sizes. Some halflings have been buying dogs from breeders in Greyhawk for use in tracking game, hunting bandits, and guarding property. Breeding livestock is also sought, particularly ponies, cattle, and poultry (chickens, ducks, and geese).

Religion in Elmshire

Most clerics in Elmshire are female. This has been a long tradition in halfling communities, but it is quite pronounced here. Male clerics are primarily found among Arvoreen's worship, working as warriors or scouts.

Ehlonna of the Forests is the Flanaess deity most revered by Elmshire's folk. This fertility goddess is also seen as governing the affairs of farmers, herders, fishers, hunters, foresters, brewers—in short, everyone who makes a living in Elmshire. Female priests of Ehlonna are commonly seen here, clad in their pale green robes, carrying walking sticks, and followed by friendly dogs of every sort.

These priests collect seeds, minister to the injured, and track game or bandits. About two out of five halflings here follow Ehlonna.

Another Flanaess deity regarded well here is Pelor, though few halflings become clerics of this god. One (female) halfling priest of Pelor currently lives in Elmshire, with perhaps two-dozen followers.

The standard halfling gods are widely worshiped here, particularly Yondalla (chief deity of the pantheon, a creator and protector), Cyrrollalee (a goddess of trust and homes), Sheela Peryroyl (an agricultural deity), and Arvoreen the Defender (a militant protector god). About three out of five halflings here actively worship one of these gods. However, nearly all halflings frequently donate money and time to the clergy, shrines, and temples of more than one deity. A farmer might give offerings to Sheela Peryroyl, Ehlonna, and Cyrrollalee for the safety of his farm and richness of his crops. If called to war, he will also give coins and prayers to Arvoreen, with a prayer or two to Yondalla for the security of Elmshire as a whole. Only thieves, scouts, and adventurers give prayers and offerings to Brandobaris.

Elmshire celebrates several holidays throughout the year, as detailed in *The Adventure Begins*, pages 40–47. Needfest, Growfest, Richfest, and Brewfest are major celebrations. All have religious overtones, though with a strong earthy streak and much partying. Elmshire, almost completely made up of extended families with huge burrow-home farms, has no impoverished or homeless population to speak of, but those families less well off than others are provided for by neighbors during holidays.

The Shady Side of Elmshire

Elmshire's mayor directs the local police force, which consists of about two dozen deputized household heads who adjudicate problems within the community. These deputies look like any other citizen but have the power to arrest lawbreakers and impound items. Most deputies perform their duties in a low-key manner and approach outsiders in a friendly way to ask their business. A rough-looking party is approached by a single deputy who is secretly backed up by as many archers as can be found in a brief time. A known bandit gang is likely to have been detected early on, and it will be attacked without warning after the whole community is alerted by shouts, horn blowing, metal-on-metal clanging, and so forth.

Local crime is quite minor and almost always of the nonviolent variety: simple theft (here known as "wrongful borrowing"), failure to repay debts, unlawful goat or sheep rustling, etc. Halflings normally do not drink to excess except during Brewfest and certain other holidays, and they tend to be "friendly drunks" at worst. After the Yellow Eye plague, however, drinking became a serious problem in some households, and domestic violence increased. The townsfolk, including the mayor, try to ignore or downplay this problem, as it embarrasses them greatly. The local clergies of Ehlonna, Pelor, and Cyrrollalee have become very concerned, however, and are looking for solutions to turn the community around and put its people at peace.

Few visitors realize this, but Elmshire has a light but long-established smuggling trade. The smugglers have no common name for themselves and are not organized as a thieves' guild, instead working on a personal basis through outside agents. Most residents of Elmshire are vaguely aware such activity goes on, but they turn a blind eye to it. Smuggling brings in needed goods for low prices. Goods are quietly shipped here from certain merchants in Furyondy, the Urnst states, and elsewhere for sale to local citizens, ignoring the minor import taxes that Elmshire should be paying as a part of the Domain of Greyhawk. These goods might also be banned by various trade agreements with Greyhawk itself, whose guilds occasionally attempt to monopolize trade with Elmshire. The smugglers (who are usually thief NPCs) are by day perfectly normal, law-abiding farmer-citizens. So long as this fiction is carefully maintained, no one cares what they do at night—as long as no one gets hurt and Rhennee are not involved.

The Rafters stationed in Elmshire at the docks have become aware of the smuggling that goes on in Elmshire to avoid Greyhawk taxes, and a few Rafters have demanded bribes to keep their mouths closed about it. This has led to tension between the smugglers and the Rafters, a situation most farmers are

unaware of though they regularly use the Rafters to ship produce and other goods south to the Free City.

True criminal elements among these halflings are very rare. A notable recent exception was Permen Merrifoot, whose hideous crimes were detailed earlier. However, there was also Griswald Hairhand, an adventurer who was exiled in 580 CY for theft and blackmail. Many felt Griswald was unfairly accused, but the evidence against him was strong. Two farmers who claimed Griswald was a follower of dark rites later vanished; Griswald cannot be found now to be questioned about this. Aside from these two extreme examples, crime in Elmshire has been unremarkable. Halflings who are members of the Thieves' Guild in Greyhawk have little record of notoriety here, keeping their unlawful talents employed elsewhere or out of public view.

As a final note, the Rhennee heatedly deny they had anything to do with the kidnappings of halfling guards in 585 CY, and they feel Elmshire is treating them unfairly. However, a character who is a Rhennee (or was adopted by this folk) realizes that most Rhennee think there is some truth to what the halflings say, even if they deny it, and they greatly regret the trouble this has brought them. The fall of Zoran Sarraith in 585 CY broke Iuz's hold over the Rhennee (see the Greyhawk adventure *Return of the Eight*), but the Rhennee still suffer from great prejudice as a result of Iuz's influence.

DM s Notes

Elmshire is an excellent place for hairfoot halfling characters to call home. Almost any other sort of human or demihuman character could also hail from Elmshire, so long as the character or his family has a strong interest in agriculture or a related field (farming, herding, fishing, herbalism, baking, brewing, and so on). However, half-orcs and Rhennee must come from somewhere else because of powerful local prejudices. Elves and half-elves are also rare but would be welcome. Elmshire has no facilities for training wizards, and priests have only a handful of local gods for worship (Ehlonna, Yondalla, Cyrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, Pelor, and a few others). Warriors are the most common character type here, followed by thieves and fighter/thieves (scouts and smugglers, as explained below). Nonhalfling bards of non-evil intent have always found Elmshire open to them.

Of those few halflings with thieving skills here, many learned their tricks from halflings who unofficially work as scouts, scouring the Cairn Hills for signs of bandits and other threats to the community. Thieving skills are taught on an individual basis, one halfling to another, and no mention is made of the details of this training in polite company—it simply isn't proper. Scouting and adventuring are regarded as necessary evils to most of the bucolic community.

References

City of Greyhawk boxed set, Gem of the Flanaess: pages 16, 21; *From the Ashes* boxed set: Campaign Book, pages 13, 22, 25, and "Slavers by Midnight" cardstock adventure; WGR5 *Iuz the Evil*, page 90; *The Adventure Begins*, pages 42, 44, 46, 47, 48, 50, 69, 96, 104; *The Adventure Begins: Adventure Maps*, pages 2, 7.

Elmshire offers a variety of low- to mid-level adventures. Perennial troubles with bandits and minor monsters in the hills are usually its main problem. A series of adventures rooting out such troublemakers could be run for an all-Elmshire group of characters. The discovery of unexplored cairns, hidden headquarters of evil cultists, or marauders from the Empire of Iuz (who sailed here from across the Nyr Dyv) will provide higher-level headaches and riches.

Speaking of treasure-filled cairns, the locals do not know of many spots that have not already been hit by dedicated adventurers. A few rumors of odd caves, peculiar noises, missing livestock, and so forth in the countryside to the south might lead clever parties to a "new" cairn or two. Fishers know of a variety of shipwrecks, which they will point out for a fee, but most of these have nothing of worth in them.

The AD&D game statistics for two Elmshire characters are important. Windsor Greenshade [NG ½m F5/T6; hp 33; Wis 16, Cha 16; *short sword +3, ring of protection +2*] is still mayor, but he is considering retirement. This could leave the way open for a PC to run for his office.

Griswald Hairhand is much less pleasant. The DM can design him to be an adversary for PCs and an enemy of Elmshire. He was briefly detailed in WGR5 *Iuz the Evil* [NE ½m T15; hp 49; Dex 15, Cha 17; many magical items] and works for Iuz directly as a spy, thief, information collector, and traitor to his people. It is possible he had something to do with the Yellow Eye plague of 583-584 CY.

Rumors in Elmshire

Any group of adventurers welcomed to Elmshire encounters many bits of half-baked "news" from the locals in their taverns. Often, locals tell these rumors just to see what adventurers say about them, in hopes that more news and rumors spill forth.

The return of the archmage Tenser in 585 CY brought joy to the community, along with a raft of whispers about his most recent adventures, plans, and projects. It is often said that Tenser's fortress, along the southern Nyr Dyv coast over 40 miles east of Elmshire, is home to monsters, artifacts, and wizardry unparalleled. The halflings love Tenser's presence but fear him personally.

The Rhennee are greatly hated here with a fury that may surprise visitors. Most people believe the Rhennee are responsible for thefts and troubles in the village, and wild accusations about "midnight raiders" (always Rhennee) are common. Woe to any ship approaching Elmshire from Midbay during the night hours with no lights shining—a sure sign they are truly the dreaded Rhennee!

Roger E. Moore was editor of DRAGON Magazine *during the Eocene Period, evolving since then into a variety of primitive lifeforms until becoming an editor once more. He sends his love and gratitude to his legion of fans, but would like for them both to stop calling him at home.*

By Any Other Name

GNOMES & HALFLINGS

by Owen K.C. Stephens

Dungeon Masters and players frequently encounter the problem of naming demihuman characters. It's difficult and time consuming, especially when a DM wants demihuman names to reflect the race's special attitudes and philosophies. This desire is particularly important for gnomes and halflings, who often receive less attention than other races. Names are an important part of what makes gnomes more than beardless dwarves and halflings more than short humans.

The gnome and halfling name generators that follow can help with this important task. Although no single article could possibly represent all the possible names for races as diverse as gnomes and halflings, these lists serve as starting points and quick references to create interesting and consistent names.

How It Works for Gnomes

Each gnomish name consists of one or more name fragments (from **Table 2**) and maybe an earned name (from **Table 5**). Definitions are included in **Table 2**. When combining fragments, an "a" or "e" often links them. Female gnomish names usually end in "-a" or "-ae" added to the last name fragment. Most item and place names are also feminine. A name formed from a single fragment often adds "-l" or "-el" to the end for males and "-al," "-a," or "-anna" for females.

You can generate a gnomish name by rolling on **Table 1**. If you prefer, it is also possible to pick a set of definitions you like, then assemble a name that matches them. If you want your character's name to reflect that he is a bold illusionist, you might decide his name will mean "Heroic Illusionist." This can result in the name "Arumawann," "Wannarum," "Wannearum," or "Arumewann." If your character is female, you might decide on "Wannearuma."

If you don't like a particular combination, try some other name fragment for part of the name, or add an i, k, r, s, or v. Although not every combination of name fragments sounds right, usually only a minor change is called for. If you can't make a particular name work, try one with a similar meaning. If you didn't like "Wannearuma," try a name that means "Powerful Master" instead.

If you have randomly generated a name and don't like its definition, try altering the order of the words. It is also important to remember that these definitions are just starting places for a name's meaning. Often the definitions can be combined in a poetic way for better results. In the case of a name with three or more syllables, try dropping one or more of the definitions.

Thus Pallabar could mean "The Hidden Softness," "Cloak of Disguise," "Supple Falsehood," or just "Cloth Shadow." Don't worry about two names sharing the same meaning or having two definitions for one name. There are many different dialects of gnomish languages, and name definitions vary from village to village.

How It Works for Halflings

Like gnomish names, each halfling name consists of one or more name fragments (from **Table 4**) and possibly an earned name (from **Table 5**). When combining two halfling name fragments, an "o" or "ee" is frequently added between them. Female halfling names sometimes double the last consonant and add an "-a" (thus Furgren becomes Furgrenna).

Halfling names tend to be softer and more complex than gnomish names. If you don't like a particular combination, try adding an a, i, or y between the name fragments, or add "-en" or "-enna" to the end. As with gnomish names, not every combination of name fragments will sound right. If you can't make a particular name work, try to create one with a similar meaning.

The definitions for halfling names sometimes end up being no more than a list of pleasant things. Calopee might just mean "Cheese and Riddles" and still be a well respected halfling name. Of course, it might also mean "The Timeless Quest." Or it might mean both. Halflings actually enjoy playing with their names' definitions, and might decide to change a definition just to confuse a friend or member of a larger race.

Although Owen Stephens' wife knew he had a fondness for earth-tones and gems, she was amused to discover his name meant "Beloved Husband" in gnomish.

Table 1: Gnomes

1d10	Result
1–4	Roll once on Table 2.
5–7	Roll twice on Table 2.
8–9	Roll twice on Table 2 and once on Table 5.
10	Roll three times on Table 2.

Table 2

1d100	Name	Meaning
1–3	*Arum*	Great, hero, heroic, mighty
4–5	*Add*	Ax, sharp, sword
6–8	*Baer*	Living, open, tree, woodland
9–11	*Bar*	Disguised, false, hidden, shadow
12–14	*Callad*	Cousin, friendly, kin, related
15–16	*Chik*	Beautiful, fair, haven, home
17–19	*Dal*	Skill, skilled, master/mistress, useful
20–22	*Din*	Tool, useful, weapon, valued
23–25	*Eaus*	Giant, powerful
26–27	*Erf*	Friend, friendly, kind
28–29	*Enn*	Companion, essential, husband/wife, vital
30–31	*Faer*	Blue, cool, ice, sapphire
32–34	*Flan*	Earth, hard, rocky, stone
35–36	*Fen*	Earthen, firm, hill, hills, sturdy
37–39	*Gaer*	Defense, shield, strong, protective
40–42	*Gar*	Father/mother, first, honored
43–44	*Hed*	Confusing, mystery, riddle, secret
45–46	*Herl*	Noble, ruler, virtue, virtuous
47–48	*Ien*	Enemy, evil, pain, wounded
49–51	*Jan*	Blessed, divine, god/goddess
52–53	*Kaer*	Fire, hot, red, ruby
54–56	*Len*	Good, jewel, treasure, trusted
57–59	*Lun*	Complex, device, mechanical, tinkerer
60–61	*Mikk*	Desert, harsh, severe, void
62–64	*Neb*	Child, innocent, new, young
65–66	*Oaen*	Flexible, knot, maze, twisted
67–68	*Ow*	Beloved, loving, warm, welcome
69–70	*Pall*	Cloak, cloth, soft, supple
71–72	*Pin*	Air, free, swift, wind
73–74	*Raer*	Holiday, joy, joyful, ritual
75–76	*Ras*	Emerald, green, homeland, park
77–78	*Seg*	Deep, distance, far, long
79–81	*Skor*	Art, craft, knowledge, wise
82–84	*Tikk*	Animal, furry, hairy, pet
85–87	*Uran*	Armored, guardian, keeper, supportive
88–90	*Urd*	Black, blind, mole
91–93	*Van*	Allied, dedicated, friend, servant
94–96	*Var*	Funny, humorous, jester, joke
97–98	*Wann*	False, illlusionist, sly, thief
99–00	*Wed*	Diamond, hard, powerful, white

Table 3: Halflings

1d20	Result
1–3	Roll once on Table 4.
4–9	Roll twice on Table 4.
10–13	Roll once on Table 4 for a first name and twice for a last name.
14–19	Roll twice on Table 4 for a first name and twice for a second name.
20	Roll Twice on Table 4 for a first name and once on Table 5.

Table 4

1d100	Name	Meaning
1–3	*Arv*	Badger, fearless, fierce
4–5	*Baris*	Curse, fool, hapless, unlucky
6–8	*Brand*	Adventurous, bold, courage, hero
9–10	*Bren*	Black, cold, dark, night
11–13	*Cal*	Curious, joker, quest, riddle
14–15	*Chen*	Beard, hairy, handsome, warm
16–18	*Cyrr*	Defender, elder, strong
19–20	*Dair*	Playful, rascal, thief
21–23	*Dal*	Home, provider, shield
24–25	*Deree*	Brother/sister, squire, stout
26–28	*Dric*	Lazy, mule, pony, stubborn
29–30	*Eere*	Deer, jumping, high, tall
31–33	*Essel*	Arrow, bow, fleet, flying
34–35	*Fur*	Comfortable, common, heritage, snug
36–38	*Galan*	Burrow, earth, field, house
39–40	*Gen*	Bargain, diligent, merchant, trader
41–43	*Gren*	Baker, cook, feast, green, plenty
44–45	*Ien*	Blue, clean, sweet, water
46–48	*Illi*	Big, deity, greatest, power
49–50	*Indy*	Beautiful, kind, forest, woodland
51–53	*Iss*	Festive, gala, happy, village
54–56	*Kal*	Cunning, fox, prankster
57–58	*Kep*	Child, small, young
59–61	*Kin*	Dance, dancing, fire, quick
62–63	*Li*	Bard, legendary, story
64–66	*Llalee*	Food, happy, hearth, home
67–68	*Lur*	Hard, stone, white
69–71	*Mel*	Lad/maiden, playful, wild
72–73	*Opee*	Cheese, lasting, timeless, yellow
74–76	*Ped*	Cherry, red, copper
77–79	*Pery*	Flower, loyal, love, romance
80–82	*Penel*	Crafter, merit, valuable, weaver
83–85	*Reen*	Peaceful, peacekeeper, sheriff, warrior
86–88	*Rill*	Farm, farmer, food, life
89–90	*Rorl*	Divine, eternal, immortal
91–92	*Sheel*	Air, clouds, rainy, weather
93–95	*Thea*	Feet, honor, proud
96–97	*Ur*	Deadly, final, judge, stern
98–99	*Wort*	Brown, herb, silent, mushroom
100	*Yon*	Father/mother, teacher, wise

Earned Names

Both gnomish and halfling cultures have a tradition of "earned" names. These are descriptive names or titles that are given to individuals after some important or heroic event. Although these names were once given in the native tongue of gnomes and halflings, they are now usually in the Common tongue due to the influence of human cultures. A character might acquire an earned name during game play or start the game with an earned name. An earned name can be randomly determined by rolling once on **Table 5a** and once on **Table 5b**, or one may be chosen to match a character's personality.

Since gnomes and halflings tend to have somewhat different earned names, **Table 5a** frequently lists two possibilities, the first for gnomes and the second for halflings. The possible number of earned names is limitless. This list is only a starting point for such names, and DMs and players should feel free to let their imaginations run wild when coming up with new earned names.

Table 5a

1d20	Result
1	Earth
2–3	Fast
4	Glitter
5	Gold/warm
6	Honor
7	Iron/laughing
8	Lightning
9	Moon
10–11	Shadow
12	Silver
13–14	Sly
15	Small/little
16	Steel/smooth
17	Stone/stout
18	Sun
19	Swift
20	Wild

Table 5b

1d20	Result
1	Bones
2–3	Caller
4	Cloak
5	Eye
6	Foot
7	Fox
8	Gold
9–10	Hand
11–12	Heart
13	Leaf
14	Man (Lady)
15	Skin
16	Strider
17–18	Wanderer
19	Will
20	Whisper

Gamer's Guide

FREE FANTASY RPG
Posted at http://
www.electronictales.nu

SEEKING OUT-OF-PRINT MODULES?
the hit pointe
http://www.hitpointe.com
Mail-Order Game Shoppe
Specializing in Used and Out-of-Print
D&D® and AD&D® game products
No computer? Write for current price list:
185 N Park Blvd Suite 331, Lake Orion MI 48362

DANCING DRAGON CATALOG
Now two convenient ways to shop
CALL 800-322-6040
ONLINE
www.dancing-dragon.com
with online specials and promotions
free request your catalog today

Online Shopping Mall
TraderLynx.com
www.traderlynx.com
GAMENET 3000
We carry almost 7000 game products in our superstore!
Can you afford not to look?
AD&D Star Wars
Vampire Werewolf Shadowrun Babylon 5
Magic Pokemon Star Trek Battletech Rifts
gamenet3000@traderlynx.com

www.themage.com
The Travelling Mage
MAIL ORDER STORE
Up to 30% OFF Everyday!
Secure on-line ordering available
Email: themage@themage.com
(352)381-9090
(352)381-9444 Fax
2407 SW 13 St Gainesville, FL 32608

Gnomes & halflings

PC Portraits

by Sue VanCamp

Sue VanCamp used what might be one of the more unique approaches to creating her characters: she watched the *Simpsons* while drawing. "The diversity of characters in the program helped me to think of the personalities first," said Sue, "and I tried to make each one different."

illustrated by Alan Rabinowitz

Fiction by
Pete D. Manison

To Dam It Where It Trickles

Watching his star pupil through the seeing crystal, Vestian cursed his ineptness. He should have seen the signs: curiosity, a tendency to surprise him. Tanthis had never fit into the Academy of Mages at Campus Keldran, though she had risen to the top in every field of study.

Now she sat in her chamber, working a puzzle!

"I can still stop it," Vestian muttered. He wiped condensation from the crystal, focused his magic to clarify the image. His powers were weak these days; the corruption had spread far. Still, he had not lost the flow entirely.

The image shimmered, then steadied.

"Dear child."

The girl was fourteen—just at the pivotal age. If Vestian guided her properly, with her aptitudes, the possibilities were limitless. If she turned the other way, however, if her curiosity diverted her attention, or if it led her to discover the secret itself, he would have lost the finest pupil he had ever known.

"There!" Tanthis called, her voice an insect whine over the seeing crystal. "I've solved it."

Before her on the table, the puzzle lay complete.

"Oh, dear," Vestian whispered.

***

It was a chill morning, the mountains wrapped in dawnlit fog. The cold penetrated his bones, but Vestian kept climbing. The hand-carved steps were slick, and the damp air made the joints in his fingers ache, but Vestian kept climbing. A healing spell would set him right. If he couldn't manage it himself, he'd have one of the senior students perform it on his return.

Above him, the sandstone cliffs sketched a ghostly outline through the fog. Ancient builders had taken advantage of every indentation, every ledge and cave and crevasse, bricking their fronts to create rooms of every shape and size, some connected via tunnels in the rock, others accessible only from the cliffside.

Vestian continued to climb until he reached the top of the vertical path. This was Sentinel's Loft, the highest of the cliff-dwellings overlooking the campus. Here Vestian hoped to find his answers.

The fog was lifting. Vestian glanced around to make certain no one had seen him. Fires had been lit on the terraces below, sending columns of gray smoke high into the air, but the only movements were those of foraging squirrels and birds that circled in hope of a morsel. Across the valley, the highest peak of the Harbinger Range stabbed skyward like an accusing finger. Below, Campus Keldran nestled around the small monument to its founder, a fountain that produced a continuous stream of water from thin air.

Vestian turned to the dark opening in the rock. This was a forbidden place, spoken of only in whispers among even the most senior initiates. The mouth of the cave was bricked in the traditional manner, with a single entrance and high, narrow windows. The surrounding stone gave the structure the appearance of a face peering out of the earth.

Vestian braced himself and stepped into the mouth.

A candle flickered in the corner. In the tiny circle of orange light, a bearded face looked up at the intruder.

"Coriolis," Vestian said.

The old wizard sat cross-legged on the floor, his face a worn leather mask, his eyes clouded by cataracts. Vestian focused his attention, trying not to look into the shadows that surrounded him. He felt them there, in the darkness, pressing against him. He could smell their stale corruption in the air.

"Vestian. Has your time as rector ended? Few are those who visit Sentinel's Loft." The voice cracked with age, but there was an edge of amusement to it. Vestian's apprehension softened just a touch.

"Not yet," he answered. "Soon, perhaps, but not yet."

"Then…?"

Vestian hesitated near the opening. Vague, angular shapes beckoned from the shadows. This place embodied everything he opposed, yet its mystery compelled as much as it frightened. Coriolis smiled at his discomfort and moved his eyes around the room to examine that which Vestian dared not. Vestian almost envied the old man his immunity to the shapes that huddled in the darkness around them.

"Come in," Coriolis finally said. "Sit. Nothing in this cave bites, I promise you."

Vestian took a step, faltered. It was true, what the old man said, but only in a literal sense.

"You have nothing to fear from me," Coriolis assured him. "What interest could I have in contaminating you?"

Vestian considered, then moved forward to sit across from his predecessor. He had little enough to lose.

"You present the appearance of a mage with a problem," Coriolis said.

To Dam It Where It Trickles

Vestian looked into the ancient eyes. Despite the cataracts, they were deep in a new and frightening way, yet sadly empty of magic. Coriolis had been like a ghost since his change, an unseen presence that watched over the academy.

"One of my pupils," Vestian said.

Coriolis sighed. "It's always the best of them, isn't it?"

"Then you know?"

"Don't forget, dear Rector, that I was once as you. I doubt your strangest anecdote could surprise me."

"Why must the flow operate this way? We pay too great a price for our magic."

Coriolis just watched him.

"Her name is Tanthis. Since she was a baby have I nurtured her talents, protected her from the corruption as best I could. Her powers manifested early, and they were strong. As an infant, she put the image of milk into the minds of everyone who came near. When she slept, she muttered in forgotten tongues. I found her soon, removed her in time."

"And now?"

"The balance is delicate, as always. I had such hopes."

"Ah," said Coriolis. "Then it has begun."

Vestian nodded, remembering powers lost. Soon he would become like Coriolis, withered of body, a new depth in his eyes but his magic lost forever.

"She questions everything. 'Why does day follow night?' 'Why does it never rain when the sky is blue?' I keep the answers vague, as best I can, but I fear she seeks them elsewhere."

A distant smile had crept across the face of the old master. "I had such a pupil once. His powers were strong enough to turn rivers from their beds, to drive sickness from those left for dead. I dreamed I'd trained the next wizard king."

"And?"

"You healed the lensmaker's daughter."

Vestian stiffened. "Me?"

Coriolis nodded. "You remember. I'm sure you do. I tried forgetfulness spells, but they hold only so long."

Curse his brain, he did remember. "The microscope."

"I'm sure the craftsman meant no harm. A gift to reward the mage who had saved his child. But you used the gift, didn't you? Only once, before I found you, but it was enough."

Vestian slumped, his head in his hands. "What am I to do?"

Coriolis stood, picked up the candle. Vestian averted his eyes from all that the light exposed. "I've come up here every day since my retirement. Each time I've thought about destroying what resides here. It wouldn't change anything, though. Magic needs its anti-magic. You can't make light without creating shadows."

Vestian wrapped himself more tightly against the cold. "I can't keep her prisoner. She'll leave Campus Keldran soon in any event. Then what?"

Coriolis turned, and in the flickering light he glowed like a wraith. "You do what you can. Monitor her interactions with the others. Remove from her chamber any objects that might kindle curiosity."

"That's all I can do?"

A hand on his shoulder, the gentlest of touches. "Magic flows where it will. Ours is to nourish it where it pools, not to dam it where it trickles."

***

Vestian searched Tanthis's chamber while she was away for the morning meal. He felt like a thief, opening drawers and probing among her clothes, but it had to be done.

Chants from the hallway interrupted his search: the first-year students, fasting as they sought the flow. Vestian opened the bottom drawer, felt among undergarments and socks. His fingers found something hard and plucked it from the drawer. It was a small wooden case with a transparent lid. Inside the case, half a dozen rock fragments were mounted above simple, hand-lettered labels: obsidian, amethyst, amber. Vestian frowned at his discovery and tucked it into his pocket.

Under the bed he found a butterfly collection and the puzzle. Interlocking wooden panels could be assembled in any number of configurations, but only one yielded the correct shape, an octahedron. Tanthis had solved it; the damage was done. Vestian thought about leaving it, but at the last moment he changed his mind, disassembling the puzzle and stuffing the pieces into another pocket.

He heard another sound from the hallway. Vestian held his breath and mentally invoked a spell of invisibility. It had, of course, no effect.

The footsteps passed.

Vestian continued his search.

***

"Enter."

The knock on his office door had been soft, timid. Vestian moved around his desk as the door opened. A small girl stood there in a simple gray cloak and loose cotton pants.

"Tanthis."

She hesitated at the threshold, her hair an unruly mass about her face, her eyebrows drawn together in annoyance.

"Rector Vestian."

"Please, sit down. Tell me what's on your mind. Trouble with one of the exercises? Private tutoring is always—"

"No," she said, eyes downcast. "Nothing like that. I came to report a theft."

Vestian marshaled his thoughts, trying not to think of—

"You," she whispered. "It was you who took my things."

Such powers!

Vestian sighed. "Why do you say that? Tell me, what was taken?"

She raised her eyes, defiant. "Why tell you what you already know? The things are there, in the top drawer of your desk."

"Tanthis, please. You don't understand."

Now her eyes searched his, looking for answers to questions she shouldn't have known to ask. Vestian's heart sank. Was it already too late?

"I just want to know why," she said.

Vestian walked back around his desk and opened the drawer. One by one, he placed the items on the desktop. "These things are forbidden here."

"But why? What harm can they do?"

He remembered asking the same question of Coriolis so many years ago. And he remembered what his old master had answered.

"You ask too many questions! The answers would compound the damage. Don't try to understand."

"But—"

"Tanthis. Dear, clever Tanthis. Is it too much to ask that you trust me?"

"Why must—"

"Enough! Should I send you home, to spend your life tending hearth or gathering crops? Do these toys mean so much?"

Her eyes flashed with anger. Spontaneously, the puzzle caught fire, the rock specimens melted, and the butterflies burst into flame, their wings beating in futility against the pins that held them.

"Not at all," Tanthis said.

Vestian raised his hand, and for an instant the urge to strike her was almost too powerful to suppress. Then his shoulders slumped, and the strength drained out of him.

"Return to your chamber," he said wearily. "Do not leave it until you are summoned."

***

Tanthis slipped away in the night, not knowing that Vestian watched. The seeing crystal barely flickered now, and Vestian had to summon all of his magic to track her as she scaled the moonlit cliffside paths. He lost sight of her before she reached her destination, and he was never able to make out what she carried in the knapsack slung over her shoulder.

***

"Try harder. Concentrate."

Vestian held his breath. Tanthis had never had trouble with levitation before. Vestian watched the boulder wobble, roll slightly to one side, and lie still.

"Try the smaller one," he suggested.

Tanthis raised this one with no difficulty, but it hung in the air for only a few seconds before it fell to the ground, fracturing into several pieces.

"No, no, no! Keep your mind still. Let the magic work through you. Have you forgotten everything I've taught you?"

The other students looked on, their stares harsher condemnation than his words could ever be.

"I'm just tired," Tanthis mumbled, lowering her head.

Later, in transmutation, the problem surfaced again.

"Lead into copper. How clever of you. Now try it again."

The metal block glowed, bubbled, and melted into a puddle on the stone dais. They all gathered round. It was still copper.

"Can I try?" another pupil asked.

"I can do it if she can't," said another.

Tanthis blushed. Tears in her eyes, she ran back to the dormitory.

***

Night brought silence to Campus Keldran, but it brought no peace to Vestian. He paced before the fire in his chamber, wondering what else to try. The ways of magic were fragile. Could he repair the damage? Or was it already too late?

He tried the seeing crystal again. Only smoke filled its translucent facets. His mind was too troubled.

Should he punish her? It was the old way, and there had been some success with it. But that would only feed her defiance, make her desire the very things he forbade. Forgetfulness spells? They cleansed the mind, for a time. They were not, however, an actual solution to the problem, only a postponement of the inevitable.

Vestian wrung his hands in despair. Other pupils showed promise, true enough, but in none did the magic flow so strongly. In none did he sense such potential. If only she could be made to understand, but that was a paradox.

Still, it might be his only hope.

He decided it then, and taking no time to change clothes, Vestian left his chamber and padded down the cold stone corridor to the dormitory. He would explain it to her, explain it as Coriolis should have so many years ago. Maybe his mentor was wrong. Maybe he could stop it in time.

He rapped lightly on her door. When there was no answer, he opened it and stepped into the chamber.

A single candle guttered on the table, its wax spilling onto the stained wood. It was light enough for him to see that her bed was empty.

***

Up the hand-carved steps Vestian climbed. It was windy up here; the cold sliced right through him. He realized he should have taken time to fetch his cloak. No matter. Chilled bones could be warmed again. Other damage was more permanent.

At last he reached the highest dwelling. Fearing the worst, he entered Sentinel's Loft.

Blackness enfolded Vestian as he silently recited an incantation. Once, the spell would have filled the cave with flames. Now it produced barely enough illumination for Vestian to see what he had avoided on his previous visit.

All around him they ranged, these slayers of magic. In all their colors, in all their shapes and sizes, they crouched along the walls, everywhere, waiting to spread their corruption further.

She wasn't here.

Wearily, Vestian returned to the ledge. Perhaps he'd been wrong. Could this whole thing be a misunderstanding? Could it be that he wasn't really losing her at all? He was about to descend when a sound caught his attention. Was that the call of a night bird? Or a girl's laughter?

He turned.

"It's a cold night to be roaming about in only your nightclothes." Coriolis stood two paces away, nearly invisible in the darkness.

Again the sound came. Vestian looked up. There was no sign of a lantern or a torch. He was certain, though, that the sound had come from above.

"Where's Tanthis? Has she come to some harm?"

The former mage only watched him. Vestian drew a step nearer, hoping to read something more in his face, but the wrinkles vanished in the darkness, leaving only the eyes to silently regard him.

"What have you done?" Vestian asked.

Coriolis shrugged. "Perhaps nothing. Go and find her. She may have lost her grip, fallen."

And with her levitation skills waning … "No," Vestian said. "I'll not indulge in such fearful speculation. Tanthis can take care of herself."

"Then why are you here?"

Vestian asked himself the same question, answered it for both of them. "I'm an old fool, chasing in the night after his own lost youth. Ridiculous. I should be in my chamber, warming by the fire, planning tomorrow's curriculum."

"Yet something draws you here." Coriolis cocked his head. "Perhaps you wish to succumb to your temptation at last."

Vestian's pulse raced. "Never," he said. "Not as long as I can cure even a wart with my magic."

Coriolis said nothing, but followed in silence as Vestian moved to the path that would take him higher.

He climbed.

Some inner voice drove him on, up the sheer cliff-face, where the handholds grew slick with the moisture that drained from the grasses above. Soon the last of his magic would be spent, and he would be forced to name a successor. Perhaps this was his last chance to make a difference.

That sound again! Vestian hastened up the trail, blood pounding in his ears. He didn't fear falling, no longer did he doubt he was doing the right thing. That *was* a girl's laughter.

The rock was slippery under his fingers. Vestian hoisted himself over the edge and stood on top of the cliff. When he turned his head, he saw that Coriolis had come up behind him. The old man wasn't even winded by the climb.

"Is this your doing?" Vestian demanded, straining his eyes to see by the starlight. "Did you deliberately contaminate her?"

Coriolis remained silent. Vestian took a step away from the edge, seeking a better vantage point.

"What's to stop me from destroying them, after all?"

Coriolis finally spoke. "Nothing. It wouldn't matter, though. Magic always attracts its opposite, its anti-magic. The temptation, in some form, would remain."

Vestian shook his head at his predecessor's evasiveness. A mind-link could give him the truth, but such a feat was decades behind him.

"I'll stay here," Coriolis said.

Vestian followed the old man's gaze. He spotted her then, a face caught in the halo of light cast by a single candle. She sat on a narrow ledge, her back against the mass of stone and her feet dangling over infinity. Her face was tilted downward, looking at something Vestian couldn't see.

Catching his breath, he hurried over to her.

"Child? What are you doing here?"

She sat straighter and turned. Only then did Vestian see what lay in her lap.

"Oh, Tanthis. No."

She looked up at him. The candle flame danced in her dark eyes. The book lay open to an engraving of a leaf, its parts all labeled and its outline inlaid with gold.

"Don't be angry," Tanthis said, her voice without shame. "I've seen wondrous things."

Vestian glanced at the book. Botany. And there, spilling from her knapsack, were more books taken from Sentinel's Loft. For a moment Vestian just stood there. He could feel her slipping away from him, could sense the corruption that had already gone too far.

"There's a reason for the remoteness of Campus Keldran," he said, sitting beside her on the ledge. "There's a reason we keep our mages-in-training sequestered here. I've often thought the price you pay is too high, but I've never questioned that it needed to be paid." He felt her gaze upon him. "Until now."

"Master," Tanthis whispered, concern and confusion battling across her face. "What can be so wrong in this?" He recoiled from the book as if from a poisonous snake. Then he looked into her eyes, and he knew he had lost her.

"Tell her," came a voice from the shadows. Tanthis turned as he did, surprised, but Vestian was certain he saw a spark of recognition pass between them as Coriolis stepped into the light.

"Tell her how unfair it is, Rector Vestian—how unfair that the growth of the mind should choke off the power to do magic, that the gifted should be forced to live in exile."

"The world is poison to magic," Vestian said. "My duty requires me to keep my charges in ignorance."

"You do that well," Coriolis said. Vestian knew he was being goaded, but he refused to let the old man get to him. Tanthis, uncertain, looked back and forth between them.

"Do you think I enjoy it?" Vestian asked. "Do you think I like living in fear of every mundane fact or idea that might take

up residence in a mind? That might divert the flow until nothing is left at all?"

Tanthis finally stirred. "It can't be true," she said. "Why should reason conquer magic?"

Vestian eyed her sadly. When he looked at Coriolis, he expected to see triumph in the old mage's face. Instead, there were tears in his eyes.

"Tell her of the microscope," Coriolis instructed him.

He did. He told her of a younger Vestian who had discovered a world of tiny living things, and whose faith in magic had died, just a little. Just enough.

"That's why you took the puzzles from me," Tanthis whispered when she heard this. "The rock and butterfly collections, too."

Vestian nodded. "Such activities stimulate the rational mind, sharpen skills contrary to magic."

"And bit by bit," Coriolis added, "with every accumulated fact, the flow weakens until it becomes a trickle. Until it ceases to flow at all."

Tanthis was watching them both, expectation in her eyes. For one fleeting instant, Vestian thought of fighting it, of locking her in her room or banishing Coriolis or burning the dreaded books. But what would that accomplish? In the long run, magic would always spawn its anti-magic, as light gives birth to shadow. Perhaps the temptation was necessary, a final test of the worthiness of a mage.

Vestian turned to tell Coriolis of his decision, but the old man was gone. He turned back to Tanthis. The choice, in the end, had been hers. In time, she would discover the truth. Certainly by now she suspected a connection between her nocturnal activities and her increasing failure in the exercises. At least let her have this other kind of magic—the magic of discovery.

"I'm sorry," Vestian said, touching her forearm and rising. "I'm an old fool. I worry over my students, sometimes too much."

She took the book in her tiny hands. "It's … comforting."

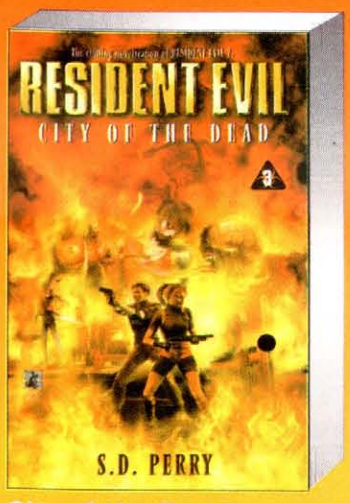
"Botany's a fascinating study, Tanthis. And there's Geology and Astronomy and Mathematics. You can make each of them your own, each in its time."

She clapped her hands together in delight and thanked him. Her joyful smile almost made it bearable that he had just lost the finest pupil he had ever known.

"Be careful on your way down," he told her, and then he turned away so she wouldn't see the tears in his eyes.

She had already opened another of the books, and by the candle's flickering flame she had begun to read.

Pete D. Manison is the author of over twenty published stories. His work has been nominated for several awards, including the Nebula.



City of the Dead

The novelization of *Resident Evil 2* follows rookie cop Leon Kennedy and reckless young Claire Redfield into Raccoon City, where a horrifying viral outbreak has transformed every man, woman, and child into one of the living dead.

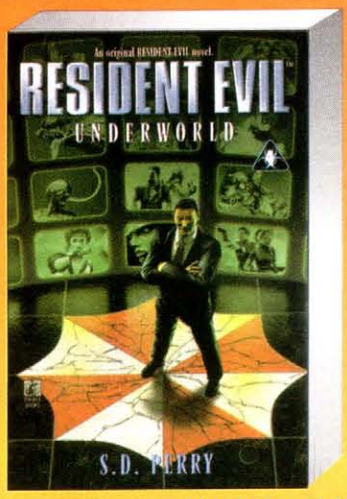
ITCHY. TASTY.

Get the latest books based on the bestselling video game series.

RESIDENT EVIL™

You know you're dying for it. With the release of the next eagerly awaited Resident Evil game still months away, feed your need with these two chilling novels from bestselling sci-fi author S.D. Perry…

Available wherever books are sold.



Underworld

Before the intrepid heroes of this original novel can discover the truth behind the sinister Umbrella Corporation conspiracy, they must fend off a renegade band of paramilitaries and a menagerie of genetically engineered killing machines.

Pocket Books

RESIDENT EVIL® & ©1999 CAPCOM CO., LTD. ©1999 CAPCOM U.S.A., INC., ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Dungeon®
ADVENTURES
Each bi-monthly issue features Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® game scenarios perfect for your campaign. Even if you design your *own* fantasy setting—DUNGEON® Adventures has something for you.
Fill out the order form today!
BROM

There's no better bargain for roleplaying adventures—save 25% or more by subscribing now.

Fill out this form and mail it, with your payment, to the address below. *(Send U.S. funds only)*

Name_____
Address _____
City_____ State/Prov._____
Country_____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Method of Payment:

☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA

Credit Card Number_____
MC Bank No._____ Expiration Date_____
Signature_____ Date_____

Mail this card with payment to:
***DUNGEON* Adventures**
TSR, Inc.
P.O. Box 469107
Escondido, CA 92046-9107
or Fax to: 619-738-4805

Dungeon® ADVENTURES

Subscribers in the U.S. and Canada will receive their first issues within 8 to 10 weeks.
All prices are subject to change without notice.

Saves DMs time and money.

Subscription Type:

☐ New ☐ Renewal (enclose mailing label)

To U.S. addresseses

☐ 1 year (6 issues) for $19.95
☐ 2 years (12 issues) for $35.95
☐ 3 years (18 issues) for $49.95

To Canadian addresses

☐ 1 year (6 issues) for $24.95
☐ 2 years (12 issues) for $44.95
☐ 3 years (18 issues) for $64.95

DMDA98

THE NEXT EPIC RPG FROM BLACK ISLE STUDIOS™, THE PRODUCERS OF BALDUR'S GATE™ AND FALLOUT™ 2

PLANESCAPE® TORMENT™

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

Welcome to Sigil, the "City of Doors," a place with gates that lead anywhere in existence, provided you have the proper key. It is a neutral ground and watering hole for races across the multiverse all under the watchful shadow of the Lady of Pain, the enigmatic ruler of the city. It is a place where the word is mightier than the sword, where thought defines reality, where belief has the power to reshape worlds and change the laws of physics.

BUILT WITH THE BIOWARE™ INFINITY ENGINE™, THE SAME ENGINE USED IN BALDUR'S GATE™.

www.planescape-torment.com

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

BLACK ISLE STUDIOS™

OFFICIAL Licensed Product

REQUIRED Windows 95/98 REQUIRED

PLANESCAPE TORMENT & DESIGN: ©1999 Interplay Productions. All Rights Reserved. Bioware Infinity Engine ©1998 Bioware Corp. Portions ©1998 TSR, Inc. Torment, PLANESCAPE, the PLANESCAPE logo, ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, the AD&D logo, and the TSR logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc., a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and are used by Interplay under license. All Rights Reserved. Interplay, Black Isle Studios and the Black Isle Studios logo are trademarks of Interplay Productions. All Rights Reserved. BioWare and the BioWare Infinity Engine are trademarks of Bioware Corp. All Rights Reserved. Windows 95/98 are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.

THE ECOLOGY OF THE JERMLAINE

The Best Laid Plans

When in Rome ... don't get caught impersonating a centurion.

by Johnathan M. Richards

illustrated by Terry Dykstra

"WELL, IF THERE ARE NO OTHER STUPID QUESTIONS," said Dreelix with a look of scorn in Buntleby's direction, "I hereby close this meeting of the Monster Hunters Association." He gave a single bang on the table with his gavel to make it official. The various wizards and sages of the exalted Association gathered their things and prepared to exit the meeting hall.

"Well, that was interesting," remarked Willowquisp.

"Yes, Dreelix was once again in fine form," agreed Buntleby with a sigh of exasperation. "You'd think we'd have learned to expect it by now."

"So, any plans for this weekend?" asked the elderly sage.

"As a matter of fact, yes," replied Buntleby. "Some field research on the jermlaine that live in the tunnels underneath my house.[1] Say, why don't you come with me?"

"I don't know ... I rather prefer to leave that wizardly stuff to the experts."

"No, no, I've worked out a way for you to come without having to be polymorphed. I guarantee it—there's no chance of you being stuck in jermlaine form."

"Really? How?"

"Remember Azurielle the nymph?"

"How could I not?"

"Well, I'll arrange to borrow her hat of disguise. You slap the hat on your head, I shrink you down to one foot tall, and presto! Off we go!"

"I don't know ... Any chance of my being stuck at one foot high?"

"None at all—the reduce spell isn't like polymorph other."

"What about you?"

"I'll use polymorph self. It's perfectly safe—I've done it dozens of times before. In fact, the jermlaine community know me as one of their own, a wandering traveler."[2]

"I don't know ..."

"Oh, c'mon, it'll be fun! A chance to broaden your horizons! An opportunity to study some of nature's creatures up close! How can you resist?"

1. Jermlaine communities are nearly always found underground. They lair in tiny caves connected by passageways scaled to their own 1'-tall frames, making entry into a jermlaine dwelling all but impossible for most adventurers without the aid of magic (usually by either shrinking, *polymorphing* into a small creature, or assuming gaseous form). Typically, jermlaine lairs connect to a large central cavern, which is often accessed by larger passageways allowing human-sized creatures to enter.

On rarer occasions, jermlaine lair in a human-made dwelling, but only after its former occupants have departed. Jermlaine don't mind living in abandoned houses, but they refuse to share their living space with the "giant races" (anyone taller than themselves).

2. Most jermlaine remain in their underground communities, seldom if ever straying far from the twisted tunnels and corridors that make up their homes. For this reason, the lone traveling jermlaine, or rover, is a beloved member of all jermlaine communities. The rover fills much the same niche as a human bard (without the singing—jermlaine detest music), passing on bits of news, gossip, and items of interest from one jermlaine community to another. Often, he is used to transport goods between jermlaine clans, lugging a coil of rope from Clan A to Clan B, then taking some stolen hard candy from Clan B to Clan A in return. Rovers are almost always skilled rat-riders, using the rodents both as riding mounts and beasts of burden during these trading missions.

"Well," said the sage hesitantly, "if you put it like that ..."

"That's the spirit," said Buntleby, slapping his elder friend on the arm. "I'll meet you at my place at ... shall we say sundown tomorrow?"

"Hrrrm," agreed Willowquisp, and they went their separate ways.

❖ ❖ ❖

The next day, Willowquisp strode up the path to Buntleby's dwelling in the Western Grove, the plot of land the young wizard had inherited a little over a year ago and more or less transformed into an osquip farm since. The place looked much the same as it did before coming into Buntleby's possession—he had caretakers to oversee the mundane chores of running the place. Buntleby might now own the land, but he was much more interested in pursuing his own wizardly affairs and raising the multi-legged osquips that he loved so much.

"Ah, there you are, right on time!" greeted Buntleby as he caught sight of Willowquisp. "Ready to go?"

"I suppose. This won't be dangerous, will it?"

"Not overly so. We'll both appear to be jermlaine, but if anything goes wrong I've got a few combat spells memorized. Plus, Ozzie will protect us, won't you, Ozzie?" The wizard bent down and scratched his six-legged familiar on the head. Ozzie wrapped his rat-like tail around Buntleby's leg and purred contentedly.

"Do you have the hat?" asked Willowquisp.

"Right here," responded Buntleby, plopping the hat of disguise onto his older friend's head.

"How does it work?"

"Just concentrate on what you want to look like, and the hat does the rest."

"I've never seen a jermlaine up close before," said Willowquisp. "What if I don't get it right?"

Jermlaine are almost totally bald from birth, remaining so throughout their lives.

"Tell you what—I have, so I'll change first, and then you can pattern yourself after me. How's that?"

"Okay."

"All right then. Here, put this on first." Buntleby offered his friend an amulet on a slender chain. The amulet was made of silver, and depicted an open mouth with a protruding tongue.

"What is it?" asked the sage, looking at the item with mild distaste.

"An amulet of tongues. I admit, not very fashionable, but you'll need it to make sense of the jermlaine speech.[3] I'll be wearing one too, if it makes you feel any better."

The two of them put the chains over their heads. "Ready then? Prepare to get small!" Buntleby rattled off the words to the reduce spell, and before the elderly sage knew it, he was about a foot tall and looking up at his enormous friend.

"My turn," boomed the giant Buntleby from above. Arcane words spilled from his lips, and he shrunk to the same size as Willowquisp.

He was, however, no longer the young wizard that Willowquisp had come to know over the course of the last year. Where once he had light brown hair, Buntleby now had a pointed, mostly bald head with only a few sparse wisps of gray hair flowing in the breeze. His blue robe was gone, replaced by a filthy-looking loincloth. Thick, dirty nails grew from nimble fingers and toes. And his

3. Jermlaine speech is comprised of high-pitched squeaks and twitters, easily mistaken for the sounds of a rat or bat. This isn't coincidental, for jermlaine are also able to converse with rats of all types (including normal rats, giant rats, vapor rats, and osquips). The "rat language" is simple, but through long association with the creatures, jermlaine can converse with rats as per the 2nd-level priest spell *speak with animals*.

In addition to these two languages, each jermlaine has a 10% chance of understanding common, dwarvish, gnomish, goblin, or orc—a separate roll is made for each language. Jermlaine have excellent memories and are likely to understand a few words from each language they've heard spoken aloud. However, their vocal abilities being what they are, the creatures cannot speak such languages aloud.

4. Although from a distance a jermlaine appears to be wearing baggy clothing and a leather helmet, the creature's odd appearance is actually the result of having about 50% more skin than necessary. Their skin is warty and grayish tan, allowing them to blend in well with their subterranean environment. Because excessive clothing might hamper this camouflage ability, most jermlaine make do with filthy scraps of clothing the same general color as their skin. Others go naked, and because of the loose flaps of skin hanging from their bodies, it's often difficult to tell which are clothed and which are not (especially at a distance).

Some sages believe that jermlaine are actually distant relatives of the gnomes and speculate that their appearance is the result of a magical accident that somehow shrunk their bones but not their skin. If true, it does little to explain the jermlaine's hairlessness—they are almost totally bald from birth, remaining so throughout their lives, and males do not grow facial hair.

skin was now a leathery, grayish-tan, sagging in lumps and clumps around his lower arms and legs and dangling over a visible paunch.[4]

"How do I look?" asked the wizard, smiling a wide smile full of crooked teeth.

"Good heavens," said Willowquisp. "Must I really look like that?"

"C'mon, it's all part of the fun," chuckled Buntleby. "And we'd best not tarry—these spells last only so long, you know. I extended your reduce spell, but even so we've got maybe two hours."

Sighing in resignation, Willowquisp closed his eyes and concentrated. His features melted like wax, reshaping themselves into the resemblance of a saggy-skinned jinxkin.[5] "How's that?" he asked.

"Good, good," commented Buntleby. "I don't like the hat, though—jermlaine don't usually wear hats. See if you can make it a kerchief."

"A kerchief?"

"Y'know, like a pirate would wear. Good, but that's too colorful. Make it gray. Okay, perfect. Now roll around in the dirt."

"What?"

"It's for your own protection. Jermlaine don't see all that well,[6] but they've got an uncanny sense of smell. You wouldn't want to enter their den smelling like a human, would you?"

"Buntleby, I'm liking this less and less."

"Oh, just do it. Look, I'm doing it, see?" Reluctantly, Willowquisp followed suit, rolling around in the dust and dirt of Buntleby's farm. He sneezed violently several times.

"All right then, looks like we're ready. C'mere, Ozzie, there's a good boy." The osquip skittered up, now seemingly the size of a large horse. Buntleby grabbed a few small items and stuffed them into a tiny sack, then climbed upon Ozzie's back, settling himself between the osquip's first and second sets of limbs. He pulled Willowquisp up behind him, and off they went down a narrow tunnel into the earth.

"This is an osquip tunnel, one of a huge network that my little pets have dug in the past year or so. As their network expanded, they tapped into a similar one made by the osquips of the jermlaine clan we're going to visit."[7]

"So what's the plan?" Willowquisp wanted to know.

"We ride into their lair, announce ourselves, and chat with the clan. I'll do most of the talking, but chime in every once in a while to make it look good."

"What's our cover story?"

"I'm a jermlaine rover, a traveler between distant clans. I usually provide them with 'information' from these 'distant clans'—actually, I make stuff up, but they never leave their own burrows anyway, so they don't know the difference. You are, let's see, you're an apprentice rover from another clan far away, and I'm giving you hands-on training before you venture out on your own."[8]

"Say, uh, it's getting dark in here."

"Oh, yeah, sorry about that. I've got infravision in this form, but I don't have any way of providing you the same. Don't worry, though, there's light at the jermlaine community—it's part of one of their traps."[9]

"Wonderful."

Ozzie pressed on down the lightless, winding tunnel. Before too long, the Monster Hunters became aware of a large, open space ahead of them. The glimmerings of light up ahead teased their eyes; as they advanced, they could see it was the result of a glowing coin lying on the stone floor of an immense cavern.

"I gave them that coin the first time I visited them," whispered Buntleby. "They use it as a kind of lure to attract adventurers into this cavern—the coin is sitting on top of a pit trap. The place is riddled with hidden pits and snares—look, there's another one there."

"Ozzie knows to avoid them?"

"Sure, we've been here plenty of times before. Ozzie even helped carve out a pit or two for the clan with those teeth of his."

"Where exactly are we?"

"I'm not sure exactly. At least a mile from my place, south or southeast, I think." Buntleby looked around the empty cavern. "Funny, nobody's here. Jermlaine usually keep a lookout or two around, especially this close to their home dwellings."

"Maybe nobody's home," suggested Willowquisp.

"Somebody's always home," corrected Buntleby. "Even when the adults are out ambushing victims, the women, children, and guard rodents stay in the lair.[10] Let's announce ourselves."

Buntleby dropped down from Ozzie's back and landed gracefully on the stone floor of the cavern. Picking up two stone pebbles, he clacked them together

5. Jermlaine are commonly known by a wide variety of names: jinxkin, bane-midges, atomites, and minimi (singular: minimus). Other, lesser-used names for these creatures include: dinkos, globbos, scrabblers, rat-brothers, flappies, flabbies, squeakies, squinties, verminites, trapsters, point-heads, mouselings, minimen, tiny terrors, miniscules, manikins, rodent-riders, peewees, diminumen, and jermies—among others.

6. Jermlaine have weak eyes, disliking bright lights and squinting often. They do have infravision to a distance of 30 yards, however—a useful adaptation to an underground environment. Furthermore, their keen senses of smell and hearing grant jermlaine a 50% chance to detect invisible creatures in their vicinity.

7. There is a 75% chance that any jermlaine encountered is accompanied by 1–6 rats (25%) or 1–6 giant rats (50%). Furthermore, there is a 50% chance that any given jermlaine colony shares its lair with the creatures. On top of this, there is an overall 10% chance that the "giant rats" encountered are actually multi-limbed osquips. Regardless of type, these creatures are used as riding mounts, lair guardians, and trusted equals. Many jermlaine clans name themselves after the type of rodent with which they share their lives.

8. That's actually how jermlaine rovers get their start. Any above-ground encounter with one or two jermlaine is likely to be a rover with or without an apprentice, and their rodent mount or mounts.

9. Being so short and relatively powerless, jermlaine depend heavily on traps to capture victims. They rely mostly on pit traps, trip wires, and nets—the latter two usually being made from the shaved hair of former victims. Once a victim is down, the jermlaine warriors swarm all over him or her, pummeling the individual with crudely made blackjacks. There is a 2% cumulative chance that a jermlaine attack knocks the victim unconscious, unless the victim wears splint, banded, or platemail. These heavily armored unfortunates are usually attacked with flaming oil or acid, then devoured by the clan once slain; others are merely stripped, robbed, shaved completely bald, and left tied up in a nearby passageway.

Jermlaine only occasionally attack victims without first "softening them up" in one of their traps—and then only when there's no serious opposition. Injured, ill, or sleeping victims are preferred targets.

10. The role of the female in jermlaine society changes over the course of time. Female children are treated the same as the males: noncombatants who must learn from their elders. As adults, they are trained for combat and take part in raids and ambushes along with the males. Once a female becomes pregnant, however, she removes herself from such combat roles and devotes herself exclusively to the birthing and raising of her children. As the children mature, she takes them on practice attacks, allowing them to participate in the humiliation of captured victims. Once they are old enough to fend for themselves (around age ten—the jermlaine life span is only about sixty years), the female often resumes combat roles within her clan. Of course, this assumes that she hasn't become pregnant again during the child-rearing years.

Jermlaine women give birth to one or two children after a three-month gestation period. Seventy-five percent of those born are male, but by adulthood, the male/female ratio has evened out due to attrition of the older males.

noisily in a repetitive pattern. Willowquisp crawled down off of the osquip somewhat less gracefully, landing on his bottom with a whoof of air.

"That's done it," whispered Buntleby, dropping the pebbles as Willowquisp regained his feet and dusted himself off. "Here they come."

Emerging silently from the shadows,[11] several humanoid figures crept into view. Each carried a thin, wooden pole to which a bladed weapon was affixed. In addition, many wore a crude quiver over their shoulder, filled with what looked to be oversized darts,[12] and most carried a crudely fashioned blackjack as well. They slid out of various tunnel holes into the cavern, surrounding the two disguised Monster Hunters and their osquip mount.

"Greetings to you and your clan," said Buntleby, his words coming out as squeaks and twitters as a result of his tongue-shaped magical amulet. "I have come from afar with news of other tribes."

A hunched, old jermlaine approached. "Ah, the famed rover returns," he cackled. "And who is this?" he asked, indicating Willowquisp.

"This is Queesp,[13] an apprentice rover from the Black Rat Clan, many days' ride to the north. I am taking him on a tour of the neighboring communities, allowing him to meet with the other clans. Queesp, may I present Skeeble, the clan elder[14] of the Stonebiter Clan."

Skeeble grinned a crooked grin and, grabbing the flaps of skin around his belly, vigorously shook them up and down. Willowquisp stared at the ritual in puzzlement, trying to determine the reason for such a strange display: Was the chief fanning himself, or Willowquisp? Was he showing off his "sagginess"—was that a sign of importance, virility, perhaps? In any case, a quick glance around him showed that the other jermlaine were flapping their belly-skin at him as well; taking a wild guess, he grabbed his own illusory flaps of skin and began shaking them up and down as well. That seemed to be the right response; Buntleby gave him a quick smile and the chief beckoned them to enter the jermlaine habitat.[15]

"So, tell us of the neighboring clans," said Skeeble as they sat around a common area. "How is the Long-tail Clan? Did they enjoy the hardtack we sent them?"

"They did indeed, and send this gift in return," replied Buntleby, pulling a chunk of taffy from the tiny sack he carried. The jermlaine smacked their lips and made appreciative noises.

"We will share this after our meal," said Skeeble, setting it aside. "I hope you are both hungry; our hunters gathered a bundle of fresh grubs the other day, and they have finally decayed sufficiently."[16] The clan leader grinned wickedly at Willowquisp. "Do you like grubs, Queesp?"

"Me? Uh, yes, yes, I love them!" sputtered Willowquisp, all the while giving Buntleby a dirty look. "But, uh, I'm afraid we have both eaten recently, and, uh ..."

"Nonetheless, we are honored to join you at your meal," interjected Buntleby quickly. "I'm sure your grubs will be as delicious as they sound. I, for one, look forward with anticipation to a marvelous repast."

"Me too," added Willowquisp dejectedly.

"So, tell me, what of the Sewer Clan?" asked Skeeble. "Have they adapted well to their new home?"

"They seem to be doing well for themselves," answered Buntleby, making up the news on the spot. "Most have gotten used to the smell, and there is certainly an abundance of rats, but it's often difficult for them to find prey."[17]

"And the Fieldmouse Clan? How do they fare?"

"They've been having trouble with moles recently. Lost two of their number, poor things."

"And the White Rat Clan?"

"Oddly enough, they've begun breeding their rats for some of the giant races, trading them to wizards and alchemists for use in their laboratories. A strange practice, one I don't pretend to understand or condone."

"Ah, I see," said Skeeble mysteriously.

"So, what have you been up to?" asked Buntleby.

"Oh, you know, this and that. Breekee had her babies—twins, Skwee and Skwee-Skwee, a boy and a girl. One of our osquips was recently wounded on the surface by some tentacled horror that dripped acid on it from above." At that, Buntleby and Willowquisp stared at each other, each silently sending a signal of recognition: flumph! "Oh, and we caught

11. Although only 1 foot tall, jermlaine move at an exceptionally quick rate (movement 15). Because of their eerie silence while moving, they impose a –5 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls, and are 75% undetectable in an underground environment. In addition, their nimbleness allows them to save as 4-HD creatures, and they suffer no damage from an attack that would normally inflict half damage on a successful saving throw.

12. The miniature pike is a preferred jermlaine weapon, inflicting 1–4 points of damage. They are also proficient in the dart, causing 1–2 points of damage. These needle-sharp darts can be hurled accurately up to 120 feet. (*Not* 120 yards, as erroneously noted in the *Monstrous Manual*™ book—these humanoids are only 1 foot tall. A human can throw a dart only 120 feet [or 40 yards; see Table 45: Missile Weapon Ranges in the *Player's Handbook*]. It's one thing to allow the diminutive jermlaine a missile range equal to that of a human, but another to believe they can hurl darts three times farther.)

Other, less common weapons employed by jermlaine are the lasso (used to ensnare victims from above) and the grappling hook—usually comprised of a fishhook attached to a length of hair-rope.

13. Most jermlaine names sound like something a rat might say if it tried to speak. Long "e" sounds are therefore very popular, as are the "squ" or "skw" clusters. Many names use a single, repeated syllable. (This is especially common with twins: the first-born might be named Squee, and the second named Squee-Squee.) Oddly, jermlaine names are not gender-specific, as is the case in most languages—any name can be used by individuals of either sex. Common names include Squeewee, Skeek, Jee-Jee, Weeble, Skitter, Kee, Chee, and Fleenkie.

14. Groups of thirty-five or more jermlaine are liable to have an elder among them. The elder can be male or female, but is always at least sixty years old. At that age, the jermlaine magic-draining power often begins to manifest: By simply handling a magical item for 1–4 minutes, the elder can permanently drain it of all magic. Artifacts and relics are immune to such attacks.

The strongest or cleverest elder often serves as the clan leader, or chief. This does not mean that all jermlaine chiefs have such magic-draining abilities, or that only the chief can develop such powers. Smaller clans of younger jermlaine may not have any elders, while larger clans might boast several.

15. The belly-flapping routine is the jermlaine equivalent to the human handshake. Both developed for the same reason—to show a stranger that you are unarmed. Humans clasp hands as a sign that they are holding no weapons; jermlaine take this a step further and reveal that they have no hidden weapons concealed within the folds of their loose skin. (This is not as absurd as it seems, for the jinxkin routinely keep small items tucked into their skin folds, using them the way we use pockets.)

16. The jermlaine diet consists primarily of insects, carrion, fungi, and molds. They eat meat when they can get it—mostly lizards and their own rodents (but only when they die in battle or from natural causes; jermlaine respect their rodent companions too much to carve them up for food otherwise), plus the occasional adventurer. They don't mind eating carrion, often dining on whatever carcasses they come across. Jermlaine have a special fondness for surface foods, especially sugar, candy, and fruit. Adventurers can occasionally bribe jermlaine communities with such goodies.

17. Buntleby might be making up stuff as he goes along, but some jermlaine clans have been known to dwell in the sewers of major cities. There they often form alliances with the local Thieves Guild (especially those with wererat members), exchanging information for food and treasure. Jermlaine, with their quickness and ability to blend into the background, make excellent spies (and their ability to speak with rats doesn't hurt, either).

some intruders recently that—ah, here come the grubs!"

Skeeble's discourse was interrupted by a pair of female jermlaine dragging in two smelly insect larvae impaled on pikes. They plopped the grubs in the center of the room, then sat down on the cave floor among the warriors.

"By all means, guests first," motioned Skeeble.

Buntleby reached out and ripped off a hunk of flesh. He popped a bite into his mouth and chewed vigorously. Hesitantly, Willowquisp followed suit, taking only a small portion and saying a silent prayer that he wouldn't vomit it all back up.

"Excellent," replied Buntleby. Willowquisp decided that his friend was either an excellent actor or had an iron stomach. He kept his own piece of grub in his hand and pretended to take tiny bites from it, unable to actually put another piece into his mouth. The jermlaine, on the other hand, ripped off great slabs of grub meat and popped them into their mouths with gusto.

"So, you were saying something about intruders," prompted Buntleby. "What were they? Mites? Pesties?"[18]

"No, humans, actually," responded Skeeble. "Foolish humans who thought they could disguise themselves as jermlaine and walk right in here with us none the wiser."

Buntleby looked at Willowquisp. "Uh-oh," he said.

As if on cue, the jermlaine hunters all grabbed up their pikes and leveled them at the two intruders, surrounding them. "So, how long have you known?" asked Buntleby nonchalantly.

"We've had our suspicions from the first," replied Skeeble.

"So what finally tipped you off?"

"Skee-Skee."

"Skee-Skee?"

A lone figure emerged from a nearby entrance tunnel. His lumpy, rock-colored flesh identified him as a jermlaine immediately. However, he was somewhat different in appearance from the members of the Stonebiter Clan. For one thing, he wore a fur wrap around his loins—rat-fur, Buntleby realized. A pointed cap of the same material graced his head. And strolling up behind him was a giant rat, not an osquip.

"Allow me to introduce Skee-Skee, a rover—a real one—from the Whitebelly Clan. He recently stumbled across our clan in his travels, and he's covered quite a bit of the territory around here. According to Skee-Skee, there is no Long-tail Clan, no Sewer Clan, and no Fieldmouse Clan that he's aware of. It would seem you've been feeding us a bunch of tales these past few months."

"So it would seem," said Buntleby. "May I ask what your intentions are for the two of us?"

"First of all, let's get rid of this," said a scratchy voice from behind Willowquisp. Quick as a wink, the wrinkled old jermlaine that had sidled up behind the elderly sage snatched the kerchief from his head. Immediately, it returned to its natural shape—the nymph Azurielle's hat of disguise—as did Willowquisp himself. While still only one foot tall, he was nonetheless recognizably human.

"Oh dear," said the sage. "This is not going well at all."

"Just as I suspected," said Skeeble, nodding in confirmation to himself. "Well, we all know what happens to human intruders, don't we?"

"All too well," said Buntleby, putting his fingers to his mouth and letting loose with a piercing whistle. Then, spouting off a few words in an arcane tongue, he called forth a stinking cloud in the center of the cave.

With jermlaine warriors staggering and coughing around him, Buntleby grabbed Willowquisp by the arm and led him to an exit corridor. There they were met by a large, looming shape—through eyes streaming with tears, Willowquisp recognized Ozzie, summoned to their side by his master's whistle.

Buntleby shoved the sage up onto his familiar, then yelled "Home, Ozzie! I'm right behind!" Ozzie bounded down the corridor, into the large cavern lit with the glowing coin. He sniffed around, found his bearings, and headed for the osquip tunnel that led to his master's farm.

Buntleby ran directly behind his familiar, legs pumping furiously to keep up. Several sets of glowing red eyes appeared around the perimeter of the cavern, moving forward to pen in their prey.

The wizard stopped and spoke the words to another spell, and Ozzie shot off at the speed of a cannonball, easily outdistancing his pursuers. Buntleby saw that they were safe, then turned and worried about his own predicament.

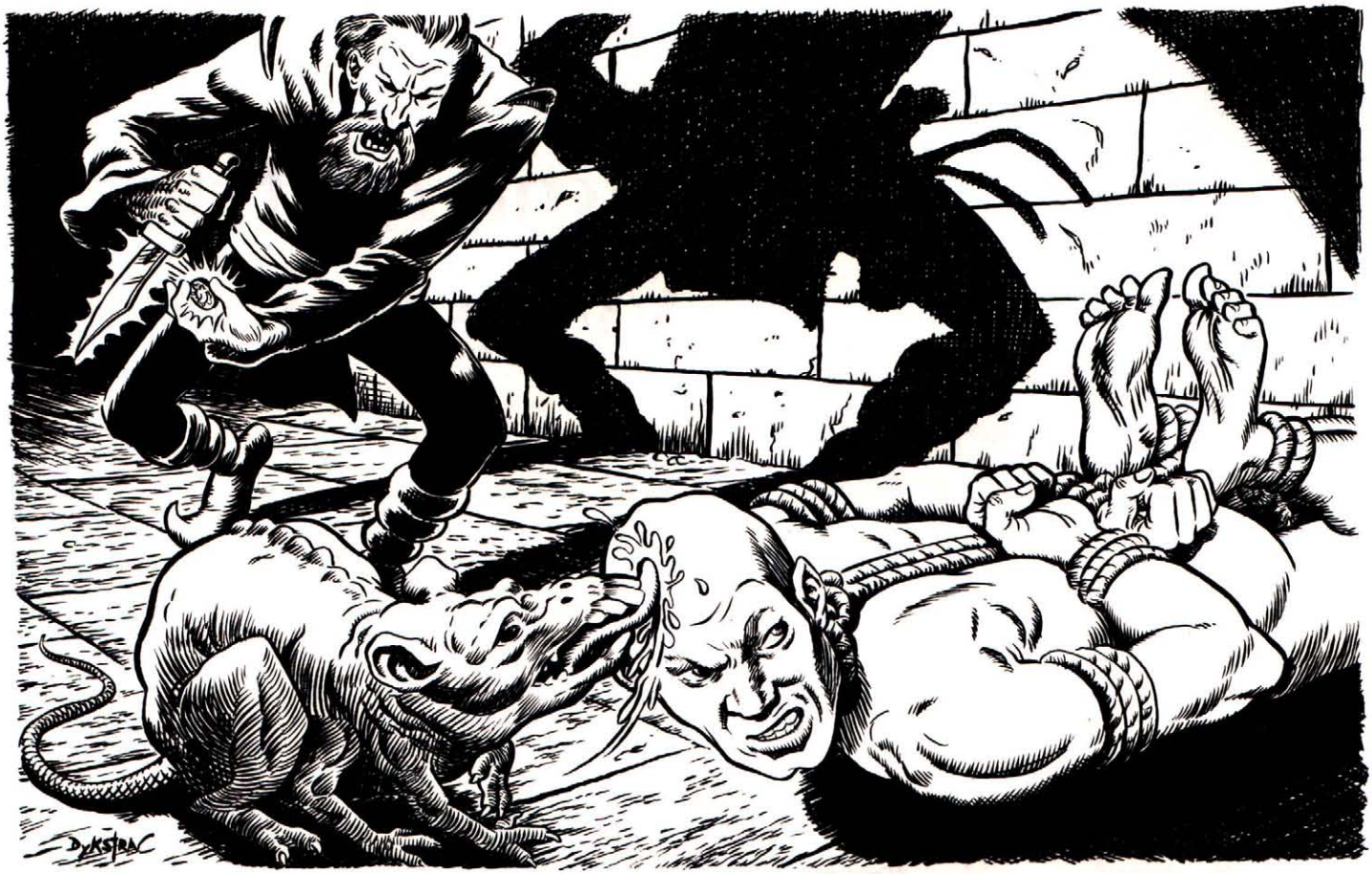
He was surrounded, both by armed jermlaine and their osquip companions. A few darts dashed past his head, narrowly missing him. The jermlaine were staying back out of reach, using their ranged weapons while they sent their osquips in for close combat. Still, there was an easy way to counter that ...

Buntleby concentrated and shifted form. His jinxkin features melted and reformed into a circular disk sprouting eyestalks from one end and tentacles from the other. Flexing his tentacles, he pounced at the nearest osquip. The creature, recognizing a natural enemy, skidded to a stop and fled in the other direction. The other osquips slowed as well, fearful to attack a fearsome, acid-spitting flumph.

However, the jermlaine had no such qualms. Several darts found their marks, buried in Buntleby's flumph-flank. Enough of this, he thought, and tried flying down the cavern. Unfortunately, his polymorph spell provided him only with physical motive abilities, not the flumph's innate anti-gravity. He flopped on his side in the middle of the cavern floor.

He spent a moment's indecisiveness deciding on another form before finally shifting to a bat. As his features melted into their new configuration, he was amazed to see a dozen jermlaine warriors pop up out of the cavern floor around him. Wielding blackjacks, they pounced on Buntleby's prone bat-form, pummeling him into unconsciousness. As his vision went black, Buntleby's last thought was: How did they?—Of course,

18. While the genetic link between jermlaine and gnomes is still unproven, there is a greater body of evidence linking jermlaine to several other types of gremlin, specifically mites and snyads (or pesties). Mites share many jermlaine traits: small size; mischievousness; hairless, warty skin; high-pitched, twittery voices; a penchant for pit traps, nets, and trip wires; and subterranean lairs. Snyads are even taller and, while sharing many jermlaine traits, differ from them by having heads full of shaggy hair. This leads some sages to speculate that the two races are stages in the regression from gnome to jermlaine.



Buntleby was naked, shaved totally bald, lying face-down with his hands hog-tied to his ankles behind him.

osquip dung! Should have thought of that myself ...[19]

Grindle was the first to spot Buntleby's prone form in the cavern, illuminated not only by the glowing coin but by Grindle's own lantern. Buntleby was naked, shaved totally bald, lying face-down with his hands hog-tied to his ankles behind him. His eyes were closed and his body covered in bruises, but Grindle could see the tell-tale movement of his chest as he breathed.

"Buntleby!" cried Willowquisp, running to his friend's side. Ozzie skittered to Buntleby's face and licked him with a raspy tongue. Buntleby groaned.

Grindle cut the wizard's bonds with a dagger, as Zantoullios and Dreelix stood on guard, ready to let fly with any of a dozen magical spells at the slightest hint of movement from the darkness. Willowquisp took the lantern as Grindle wrapped Buntleby in a blanket and hefted him over his shoulder.

"He was right where you said he'd be," commented the gangly Zantoullios. "Good thing, too, or we wouldn't have found him so quickly."

"It was stupid of him to have come here in the first place," groused Dreelix. "We've got better things to do than rescue him in the middle of the night."

"So what should we do about the jermlaine?" asked Zantoullios. "Torch the place with a few fireballs?"

"No," whispered Buntleby feebly. "Leave them be. This is entirely my own fault. Let's ... let's just go home."

The Monster Hunters turned to go, back the way they came. Ozzie trotted at Willowquisp's heel.

"Wow, Buntleby, they did a good job on you," commented Dreelix as the group departed the cavern for the surface. "You know you don't even have any eyebrows, don't you?"[20]

From the silence of the cavern came the sounds of quiet chuckling and twittering, and then an eerie silence.

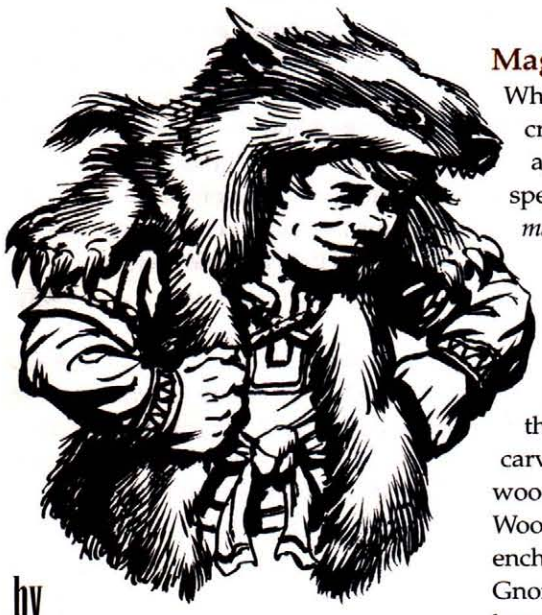
Johnathan M. Richards says his oldest son, Stuart, has a deep hatred for jermlaine, ever since they shaved his female elven thief/mage's head and eyebrows bald. She went so far as to burn the building they had been infesting down to the ground after being rescued by her party members. Which just goes to prove—"Hell hath no fury like a woman shorn."

19. Those jermlaine fortunate enough to lair with osquips have the added advantage of being able to work fresh osquip dung into a variety of useful forms before it hardens to stone-like consistency. The dung forms trapdoor covers that can conceal jermlaine warriors in tiny foxholes strategically placed around a large cavern. For more properties and uses of osquip dung, see "The Ecology of the Osquip" in *DRAGON® Magazine* #227.

20. The jermlaine have a fierce dislike for the "giant races" and like nothing better than to humiliate them whenever possible. While shaving a human's hair actually serves a useful purpose (providing the clan with the raw materials needed to fashion their ropes and nets), shaving their eyebrows does nothing but amuse the little tormentors. Other favored tricks, once the helpless captive has been securely bound, include rubbing their naked bodies with poison ivy or poison oak, destroying a favorite item in front of them (or handing a magical item to a jermlaine elder, who drains the item of all magic), and smearing finger-paint graffiti on them (these are rude, simplistic pictures, as the jermlaine have no written language).

Magic of the Wee Folk

New enchanted items for gnomes and halflings ... each of them just the right size.



by Nathan E. Irving and Andrew Turpin

illustrated by Jim Crabtree

THE MOST MYSTERIOUS OF THE MAGIC-USING RACES, gnomes are rarely the subject of the same scrutiny that befalls elves and dwarves. As a result, information on gnomish magic is exceedingly rare. Likewise, halflings are often overlooked as the inventors of enchanted items. Apart from their stature, gnomes and halflings share similar sensibilities when crafting magical items. Thus, their enchanted creations are often a reflection of their inner natures, and the "big folk" would do well to study them.

Magical Items of the Gnomes

While most gnomish magical items are created by illusionists (who have access to Enchantment and Alteration spells such as *enchant an item* and *permanency* at the appropriate levels), a few items may be crafted by earth elementalists or gnomish priests.

All gnomish items are extremely well crafted, with great attention paid to the smallest details, and they are often etched, stitched, or carved with representations of common woodland scenes or burrowing animals. Wood and gemstones are preferred for enchanted items whenever possible: Gnomish axes, maces, and warhammers have wooden hafts; swords, shields, and armor are often adorned with small jewels. At the DM's discretion, these stones might contain clues to keywords or powers, bear additional enchantments, or be focal points for the enchantment of the item, so the destruction of the gemstone triggers the destruction of the item.

Amulet of the Steinneblin

These magical *amulets* are given to the closest allies of the stone gnome clans. Each is individually crafted and recognized by the gnomes of the clan who created it. Each *amulet* bears several dweomers that provide the wearer infravision up to 60 feet and the ability to *speak with burrowing animals* at will as though the wearer were a steinneblin.

Bearers of the *amulet of the steinneblin* can also locate sloping passages (1–3 on a d6), flawed stonework (1–3 on a d6), approximate depth (1–2 on a d6), and direction (1 on a d6) underground. These *amulets* may be created by stone gnome illusionists or priests.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 2,000

Armor of Melding

This *armor* +2 allows the wearer to *meld into stone* (as the 3rd-level priest spell) three times per day. Unlike the spell, the armor allows the wearer to move through the stone at one-quarter normal

movement rate if within an arm's length of the stone's surface while doing so. If cast on an area of stone containing a character wearing the *armor of melding*, these spells have the following effects: *Stone to flesh* expels the wearer and inflicts 4d6 points of damage; *passwall* expels the character without damage; *stone shape* causes 3d4 points of damage but does not expel the wearer; *transmute rock to mud* inflicts 4d10 points of damage, expels the character, and forces the *armor* to make a successful saving throw (as metal, and without magical bonuses) vs. acid or be destroyed.

The deep gnomes are the only manufacturers of these magical suits of armor, and 95% of them are sized to fit gnomes or halflings. A full 70% of the suits are chainmail, 20% are platemail, and the remainder are brigandine. The *armor* is often made to resemble stone, adding a 10% bonus to the wearer's chance to Hide in Shadows and to the deep gnome ability to freeze in place. *Armor of melding* may be created by svirfneblin earth elementalist wizards or priests.

XP Value: 3,000 **GP Value:** 5,000

Badge of the Svirfneblin

These items are greatly valued by the deep gnomes, for each is given to a staunch ally of the gnomes of the Underdark. A *badge of the svirfneblin* is typically created in the form of a brooch, though it might also be a ring, pin, cameo, or an engraved and enchanted gemstone. Each *badge of the svirfneblin* bears certain markings that identify the individual who rightfully bears the badge and the city or clan with which they were allied.

Each badge of the svirfneblin grants the following abilities:

- *Nondetection* (constant)
- Infravision with a 90' range
- *Blur* and *change self*, each once per day
- The ability to freeze in place, with a 40% chance of remaining undetected by observers, including those who have infravision
- +3 to saving throws vs. earth-based attacks, including petrification

A full 80% of these badges are aligned toward good; the remainder are usable by neutral (chaotic, true, or lawful) characters. *Badges* of good alignment do not function for neutral characters and inflict 1d4 points of damage per round to evil characters, while evil *badges* have the opposite effects.. Neutrally aligned badges do not function for good or evil characters. *Badges of the svirfneblin* may be created by illusionists or priests of the deep gnomes.

XP Value: 5,000 **GP Value:** 9,000

Badger Vest

These sturdy garments allow wearers and their possessions to assume the form of an ordinary badger at will, permitting the wearer to traverse small passages or tunnel through soft earth with ease. In addition, the wearer may *pass without trace* (as the 1st-level priest spell) while in badger form. Lastly, the *vest* confers a -1 AC bonus in both forms. *Badger vests* may grow or shrink to fit beings as small as sprites or as large as hill giants.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 2,000

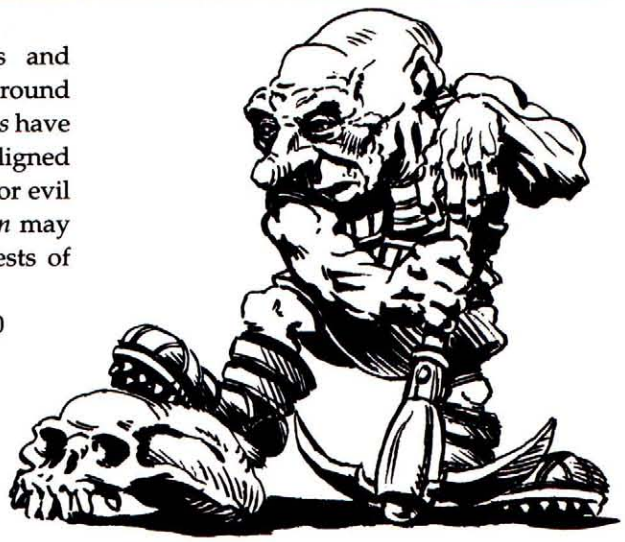
Boots o' the Giant

Also call *giantboots* and *sprigganshoes*, these sturdy but unattractive boots enable the wearer to grow to 12 feet tall once per day for up to 5 rounds. All of the wearer's clothing and equipment grow at the same pace. In giant form, the wearer is as strong as a hill giant or spriggan (19), has a movement rate of 15, and a natural AC of 3. Enlarged weapons cause triple normal base damage. The transformation takes 1 round. As with all magical footgear, the *boots o' the giant* expand and contract to fit any foot from hill giant size to as small as a pixie without altering the magical effect of the *boots*.

XP Value: 2,000 **GP Value:** 4,000

Boots o' the Hills

These tough leather *boots* are vital to gnomish guardians. Their enchanted soles grip any surface, enabling the gnomes to traverse narrow ledges, boulder fields, or even ice slicks without fear of slipping and falling. In addition, they inflict a –50% penalty to anyone attempting to track the wearer of the *boots o' the hills*. The wearer of these *boots* is immune to the effects of *grease* spells and similar effects.



These *boots* do not stick to vertical surfaces or ceilings, but they do add a +30% bonus to the wearer's Climb Walls ability.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 2,000

Bracers of Striking

These finely crafted items are the exclusive province of warriors, granting them greater striking power in combat.

1d100	Strength
01–35	+1 (17 minimum)
36–60	+2 (18 minimum)
61–75	+3 (18/01 minimum)
76–88	+4 (18/51 minimum)
89–94	+5 (18/76 minimum)
95–98	+6 (18/91 minimum)
99–00	+7 (18/00 minimum)

The *bracers* either increase the wearer's Strength by the determined number of points (one "plus" equals one percentile Strength category), or to the minimum Strength shown, whichever is greater, once per day for up to 5 rounds. For instance, a gnome with a Strength of 17 donning a pair of *bracers +3* would have a modified Strength of 18/51 (17 to 18, 18 to 18/01, 18/01 to 18/51), while a gnome

with a Strength of 13 donning the same *bracers* would gain a Strength of 18/01, the minimum increase for those bracers.

XP Value: 250 per "plus"
GP Value: 1,000 per "plus"

Cloak o' the Hills

This mottled brown, green, and gray *cloak* is often worn by gnomish scouts and sentries. Like the *cloak of elvenkind*, a *cloak o' the hills* enables a character to blend into the surroundings. A *cloak o' the hills*, however, functions far better in rocky or underground surroundings.

Outdoors, natural surroundings	
Heavy growth	90%
Light growth	90%
Open fields	90%
Rocky terrain	100%
Outdoors, other	
Buildings	95%
Brightly lit room, stone	80%
Brightly lit room, wood	60%
Underground	
Torch/lantern light	99%
Infravision	98%
Light/continual light	75%

About 90% of these *cloaks* are sized for gnomes or halflings. The other 10% are sized for humans, elves, or dwarves, but wearers of these larger cloaks suffer a –5% penalty to their chances to hide, since concealment depends in part upon the small size of the bearer.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 3,000

Crystal, Cocoon

These uncommon items are highly prized by tunneling gnomes of all kinds. Each spherical *crystal* has a multitude of facets. The *cocoon crystal* activates only when the bearer is in danger of being crushed by a large quantity of stone, such as an avalanche or cave-in. The *crystal* immediately encases the bearer in stasis within an invulnerable shell. The bearer remains so protected (possibly for centuries), until a living being touches the outside of the *cocoon* and says "open" (in any language).

The *crystal* does not protect against smaller rocks or boulders (such as sling stones or giant's weapons), only against crushing weights of stone. Each *cocoon crystal* functions three times, then crumbles into dust. While *cocoon crystals* were once created by gnomish earth elementalists or priests, the secret of their creation has been lost for many centuries.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 3,500

Figurine of Wondrous Power, Diamond Badger

Upon command, this carved statuette becomes a living giant badger (AC 2; HD 2+4; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 2–8/2–8/1–6; Int Average). While *diamond badgers* may be commanded to attack, their usual function is as a companion and tunneller. The claws of these creatures are diamond-tipped, accounting for their increased damage and enabling them to tunnel through soft earth or stone at a movement rate of 6, or hard stone at a rate of 3, leaving a 3'-wide tunnel behind them.

The *badger* may be only be used once per day, for no more than 1 hour.

XP Value: 500 **GP Value:** 1,500

Gloves of Digging

These sturdy leather gauntlets are distinguished by the sharp iron tip on each finger. When the magic of the *gloves* is invoked, the wearer may easily tunnel through earth or stone, removing roughly 60 cubic feet of earth and soft stone per round, or 30 cubic feet of hard rock. The *gloves* may be used for no more than 1 hour, total, per day. The *gloves* must rest after each use for twice the time they were in operation. (Thus, a pair of *gloves of digging* used for a turn, must "rest" for at least 2 turns before they can be used again.) A *dig* spell cast on the *gloves* allows them to be used immediately, for another full hour, even if they have already been used that day.

Gloves of digging may be used in combat and inflict 1–3 points of slashing damage per glove. Against earth-based creatures, *gloves* inflict 2d6 points of damage. This ability has no effect on how often the digging powers of the *gloves* may be used. *Gloves of digging* may be created by earth elementalists or priests.

XP Value: 1,500 **GP Value:** 4,000

Knife, Stone

These unusual items are very rare and much valued among the gnomes, in part because their creation requires the blood of a xorn.

These knives are typically 2–3 feet long, with a narrow, rapierlike blade, blunt tip, and simple grip. A *stone knife* is rarely used as a weapon, since against flesh and blood beings it inflicts only 1 point of damage, having no sharp edge, but it cleaves stone and rock effortlessly and can inflict 3d6/3d8 hit points damage on a single pass against a being of stone. (A *stone knife* is considered a +3 weapon for purposes of what it can hit.)

More commonly, however, *stone knives* are used in mining and in the excavation of a clan's warren, enabling the miners to simply extract conical plugs of stone and tripling the pace at which they can progress. A *stone knife* has greater difficulty with metals and gems, and if used against creatures of this nature, it inflicts only 1d6/1d8 points of damage (though it is still treated as a +3 weapon.) *Stone knives* may be enchanted by earth elementalists or gnomish priests.

XP Value: 3,000 **GP Value:** 4,500

Pick of Piercing

Used by rock gnomes and deep gnomes, a *pick of piercing* has a +2 bonus to hit and damage. When wielded in combat against an armored opponent, the *pick* easily locates and penetrates the vulnerable points in the armor, reducing its effective value by half, rounding down. This ability has no effect on AC bonuses from cloaks, bracers, rings, or other magical items; it also does not affect AC adjustments for magical armor. Thus, a *pick of piercing* reduces the AC of normal chainmail from 5 to 7, but it reduces the AC of *chainmail +2* from 3 to 5.

On an attack roll of 18 or higher, the damage is tripled, as the *pick* stabs a vital organ.

XP Value: 7,000 **GP Value:** 10,000

Pit Bag

Sometimes called the goblin sack, this container is an unusual variant of a *bag of holding*. When closed, the *bag* appears to be no more than 2 feet long and 1 foot wide. When opened, however, the mouth of a *pit bag* is 10 feet across and the bag itself 10–15 feet deep. The opening of the bag also takes on the appearance of the surrounding surface—leaves, stone, moss, or grass. The peculiarity of the pit bag, however, is in what it will contain. Only living material can fall into the *pit bag*—nonliving material such as weapons, armor, clothing, and knapsacks is teleported 10–1,000 feet away in a random direction. The *pit bag* may then be gathered up and carried away with no increase in weight or apparent size.

The *pit bag* can hold as many living beings as could reasonably fit into a 10' wide, 15' deep pit. They may climb out of the *bag* when it is open just like climbing out of an ordinary pit, but no light or sound may enter or exit the *pit bag* whether it is open or closed. Creatures inside enter a state of suspended animation when the *bag* is closed. The *bag* may also be dumped out, dropping all of the enclosed creatures into a heap on the ground, typically naked and weaponless. Forest gnomes are particularly fond of this item and often capture goblin patrols, dumping them out later into a lake or thorn bush.

XP Value: 2,500 **GP Value:** 5,000

Shield, Barrier

Barrier shields, or wall shields, are usually carried by gnomish pikemen or archers. These 2–3' square *shields* are placed in front of the gnome. When the command word for each *shield* is spoken, it roots itself into the ground and secures itself to the shields on either side, if any, creating a stout barrier from behind which the gnomes may attack with missile weapons or pole-arms. Only every other shield in a shield wall need be magical, since the *barrier shields* knit themselves to magical or nonmagical shields. This chest-high wall provides 75% cover to gnomes or halflings (–7 to AC), 50% cover to dwarves and small elves (–4 to AC), and 25% cover to humans and tall elves (–2 to AC). The *shield* may be knocked over if struck by more than 100 lbs, though it can resist 150 lbs if there is another *barrier shield* to one side, or 200 lbs if there are *barrier shields* on both sides.

Most *barrier shields* carry no protective enchantments, but 25% may be +1 shields or better. This bonus is cumulative with the cover bonus when the *shield* is rooted.

XP Value: 1,500, plus 500 per "plus"
GP Value: 4,000, plus 500 per "plus"

Sword, Goblinslayer

These uncommon magical weapons have several powers. The wielder of a *goblinslayer sword* may detect goblinoids (including goblins, hobgoblins, norkers, bugbears, kobolds, urds, orcs, and xvarts, but not half-orcs, ogrillons, gnolls, ogres, or other distantly related species) within 100 feet. This ability reveals approximate direction and number (one, a few, many), but not intentions, barriers between the goblinoid and the wielder, or exact numbers.

The wielder of a *goblinslayer* may invoke a berserk fury once per day when faced with goblinoid opponents. This fury grants the wielder a +3 bonus to hit and damage any goblinoid and a number of phantom hit points equal to twice the wielder's level. Any damage taken during the combat is first subtracted from these phantom points, and only when those are exhausted does the wielder suffer damage as usual. Also, the wielder may continue fighting until he or she reaches –10 hit points, but if the beserker rage ends while the warrior is at negative hit points, he or she must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or perish.

The wielder is unaffected by healing magic for the duration of the berserker rage and may not employ missile weapons. The rage ends when all goblinoid opponents are slain, the wielder dies, or when the bearer makes two consecutive Wisdom checks at one-half his or her normal Wisdom score, rounded up.

Seventy percent of all *goblinslayers* are shortswords; the rest are longswords. *Goblinslayers* may possess combat bonuses as other magical swords.

XP Value: 800 **GP Value:** 1,500

Talisman of the Forstneblin

The forest gnomes sometimes make gifts of these to members of other races who have done the forstneblin a great service. The *talismans of the forstneblin* are usually small gems or stones carved into woodland shapes such as acorns, oak leaves, or pine cones.

Each *talisman* grants the wearer the following abilities:

- *Speak with woodland animals*, at will
- *Pass without trace* in wooded environments
- +1 to saving throws vs. spell; rod, staff, or wand; and poison for every 3.5 points of Constitution
- +1 to hit orcs, hobgoblins, goblins, and bugbears

Each *talisman* is individually crafted, and thus may be identified by its maker—woe betide a thief who is discovered with a stolen *talisman*! Each is enchanted by a forest gnome priest, who is likewise familiar with the *talisman*.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 7,000

Magical Items of the Halflings

To a halfling, the world is a glorious place. Take a look at most campaigns and they'll be there, quietly dipping their fingers into money-belts, eating generous shares of the rations, and leaping around, wildly firing their slings in the heart of a bar fight. But try to find a magical item meant for one, and you come up short. The best one can do is shuffle around in chainmail built for a dwarf.

Here is a unique glimpse into their arsenal, a sly peek at what wonders lie hidden within the pockets of your favorite furry-foot. Like all specialized magical items, these work best in the hands of their owners, halflings, although in some cases they also work for others. All items function as 12th-level magic unless the power requires a higher level. In such cases, the magic works at the minimum level needed to cast the equivalent spell.

Grandfather's Keys

Grandfather's keys are a special set of tools handed down through generations of halfling families. Each set consists of three keys linked to a golden key-ring, with a fat halfling figurine dangling from it by a chain. The three *keys*—one silver, one glass, and one lead—each hold a special power that can be activated once a week. Turning the silver key activates a *hold person* spell that can affect one target for the duration of the spell. Halflings like this spell because it saves wasting energy on intruders. The glass key can be used to reveal invisible creatures, acting as a *dispel magic* spell, although it cannot be used to reveal a creature granted invisibility by an innate, spell-like power. Using the lead key in a lock holds the portal closed as if a 12th-level wizard had cast a *wizard lock* spell. Some halflings with *grandfather's keys* use this key to shut themselves securely away from the horrors that lurk outside at night.

XP Value: 1,500 **GP Value:** 3,000

Hammock Cloak

When worn by a halfling, this garment appears to be a normal cloak. If the halfling takes it off, lays it on the ground, and speaks the command words "bed time," the *hammock cloak* rises into the air to form a small hammock upon which the halfling can sleep. The *cloak* does not activate if anything rests upon it, but once working it can support up to 150 pounds of weight; anything more causes the *hammock cloak* to collapse. Anyone lying within is unharmed by the fall, as the *hammock cloak* rises only a maximum of 3 feet off the ground.

XP Value: 500 **GP Value:** 1,200

Restless Pillow

This strange item provides comfort and limited divination powers to halflings. At home, this *pillow* gives prophetic dreams when slept upon, providing a combination of the *clairaudience* and *clairvoyance* spells. The knowledge revealed is not limited to areas the sleeper knows. The *pillow* chooses what is seen and has the power to show any event that has occurred during its existence. The *pillow* need not have been present at the events it reveals and can even show visions of the future.

If a halfling is away from home the *pillow* works differently, showing events from the character's homeland. These are always comforting images; the *pillow* won't give dreams that disturb its sleeper while resting in strange lands.

Nonhalflings who use the *pillow* are plagued by dreams of halflings feasting and enjoying themselves. While these visions have no truly harmful power, those using the *pillow* for prolonged periods find themselves gradually becoming more like halflings: They eat more, travel less often, and complain bitterly when conditions become uncomfortable. Ridding oneself of the *pillow* is the only way to cure this malady.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 3,000

Bracers of Honesty

These *bracers* are used by halflings to regulate their own kind. Any halfling who wears them cannot act or speak dishonestly. Instead, wearers of the *bracers* act as if they were lawful good, shying away from any corrupt or devious activity. The only way to remove them, short of a *wish* spell, is to have a halfling town elder take them from the wearer.

The *bracers* can be destroyed by magical means, but anything short of a full *wish* causes the character's alignment to shift one step toward lawful good during their removal. The character's moral outlook changes first, evil turning to neutral, or neutral to good; if the character's morals are already good, then the ethics change from chaotic to neutral to lawful.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 1,600

Horn of Hiding

A *horn of hiding* captures a halfling's unique skill at hiding and magnifies it to conceal the *horn's* user from the prying eyes of enemies. Each *horn* is effective against one race and acts as an *invisibility* spell when blown, hiding the halfling's presence from enemies once per week. The *horn* can be heard only by halflings, and this is perhaps the greatest clue to its identity, for it appears to be an old hunting horn in every other respect.

Each *horn* is created with a specific halfling enemy in mind. The most common varieties are the orc, goblin, and troll *horns*. There is a 30% chance of a given horn having one of these races as its target. The remaining 10% of these horns target dragons, humans, giants, elementals, and undead; a DM may substitute any races that heor she feels would be more appropriate for his or her campaign. Should a member of the target race blow the *horn*, all halflings within hearing distance instantly become aware of the horn-blower. This awareness lasts for 12 rounds, acting like a beacon that gives halflings an instinctive knowledge of the creature's whereabouts.

XP Value: 2,000 **GP Value:** 3,800

Pouch of Forgetfulness

This *pouch* is favored by larcenous halflings. To them it is invaluable, because whatever is put inside the bag is instantly forgotten by the original owner. A thief may steal the cap from a wizard's head, yet as soon as it is placed inside the *pouch*, the wizard forgets ever owning it—even that the halfling has stolen it!

To generate this effect, the *pouch* casts a variation of the *forget* spell that, if the affected owner's saving throw fails, wipes any memory of the item from the owner's mind. No one else is affected, so would-be thieves must still be careful of witnesses.

Each *pouch* is about the size of a small belt pouch and is made of leather with a draw-string that securely fastens the top. Halfling users of the *bag of forgetfulness* retain a clear picture of what is inside, as the magic does not affect them; non-halfling characters who use the *pouch* also forget (with no saving throw) any belongings that they foolishly put there. Non-halfling thieves also suffer if the items stowed there are stolen, as the magic backfires, instantly alerting the item's original owner to the identity of the first thief!

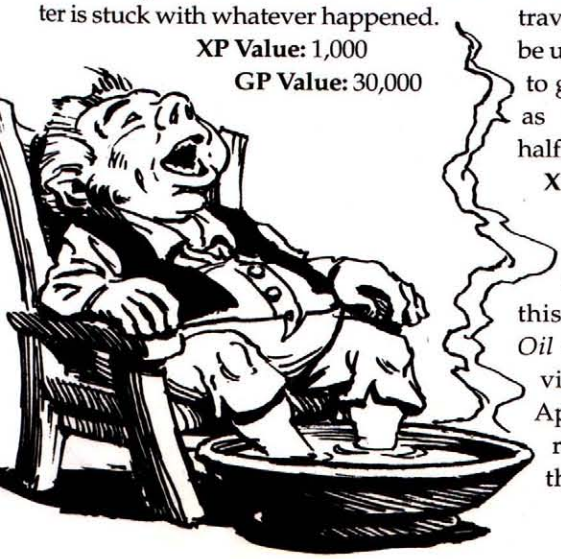
XP Value: 1,500 **GP Value:** 4,000

Wish Brush

Of all the magical items ever to pass through the hands of halflings, this is the one they hold most dear. A *wish brush* has the power to grant one *wish*, thereafter becoming a normal paintbrush again. To gain the *wish*, a halfling must use the *brush* to paint a picture of what is wanted, an action that requires an Artistic Ability proficiency check. If the check succeeds, the *wish* is granted and its effects remain as long as the painting remains.

If the artwork is destroyed, the *wish* is broken, and anything granted by it ceases to exist. Should the *brush* user roll a natural 1 on the proficiency check, the work of art is perfect, and the *wish* is made permanent, even if the painting is de-stroyed. If the proficiency check fails, the *wish* is still granted, but it is twisted in a manner that punishes the recipient. There is little chance to remove this bad stroke of luck. Destroying the picture has no effect; only another *wish* can counteract the original, but until then the character is stuck with whatever happened.

XP Value: 1,000
GP Value: 30,000



Flute of Transportation

Music holds a special power: Every tune was composed somewhere, and each melody is forever linked to its place of creation. A *flute of transportation's* power lies in its ability to fly its player to a tune's place of origin. The flight lasts as long as the tune. If the music lasts 2 hours, so does the journey. A 3-minute jig composed 2,000 miles away still brings the *flute* player there by the end of the tune. Characters fly 50 feet above the ground, and the *flute* can be used to transport one character per month. A Musical Instrument proficiency check must be made to see whether the tune is played correctly. Failure means that the halfling crashes to the ground somewhere along the way. The only way to dispel the magic of the *flute* while it is active is a *silence* spell. If the musician passes through such an area, the magic fails, and the halfling drops from the sky.

XP Value: 3,000 **GP Value:** 8,000

Hob's Footbath

This magical *footbath* refreshes the feet of any weary halfling. It can be activated once a week, filling with mint-scented water that bubbles gently. If a halfling soaks his or her feet for 1 hour, the halfling can move thereafter as if wearing *boots of speed.* For every hour spent traveling with this benefit, the halfling must spend an equal amount of time afterward bathing his or her feet. If the halfling fails to take this simple precaution, he or she moves at a quarter normal rate and suffers a 50% loss of Constitution for one day per hour spent traveling. The magic of the *footbath* can be used by others provided they manage to get their feet in. This is no easy task, as the *footbath* was designed for halflings.

XP Value: 2,500 **GP Value:** 4,500

Oil of Fake Footsteps

Of the tricks invented by halflings, this one is perhaps the most sneaky. *Oil of fake footsteps* comes in a small vial containing enough for one dose. Applying it takes two steps. The first requires the user to rub the oil on the feet of a creature. This is the hardest part, but the second step is easy: The user simply rubs the remaining oil *onto* his or her own feet. Wherever the user walks, he or she leaves the tracks of the chosen creature. Once activated, the *oil of fake footsteps* lasts for 1 turn before it wears off. Rubbing it onto the soles of boots leaves boot tracks, but if an actual footprint is required, then the *oil* must be rubbed on the bare feet of the affected creature. Applying the *oil* to the floor so the creature walks over it does not work.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 1,750

Bully Coins

Some halflings carry these golden *coins* around in their pockets just in case they meet any big thugs. A *bully coin* is a simple device: Should anyone but a halfling touch one, it activates, shrinking the victim as if a *reduce* spell had been cast by a 12th-level mage. Any halfling trapped in a tight spot gladly hands over his treasure. The trusty *bully coin* soon activates and brings his opponent down to size. Victims are allowed a saving throw; if successful, the victims are unaffected by the coin and remain totally unaware of any attack, unless the victim happens to be a dragon. This ancient race spends so much time gloating over treasure that they can tell instantly when a *bully coin* has come into their possession. *Bully coins* can be used once a day by any race, but nonhalflings must be

careful not to touch the coin or else they might end up victims to their own deviousness.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 1,500

Buttons of Climbing

Buttons of climbing come in sets of four and seem to be made of bronze, polished to a bright shine. Many nonhalflings are impressed by the magnificent waistcoats halflings wear; the fine row of buttons proclaim a testament to neatness. If a halfling is lucky enough to possess *buttons of climbing,* they will be displayed in full glory upon the halfling's coat. Should the halfling be faced with an imposing climb, however, the *buttons* can be removed, stuck on the wall, and used as stable handholds on the sheer surface. They can be moved as the halfling climbs, each *button* popping off so that the halfling can place it farther up the wall as needed. The *buttons* stick to anything and come off only if the halfling wishes, providing a +40% bonus to Climb Walls checks. The buttons pop off in the hands of nonhalflings instead of sticking.

XP Value: 750 per set

GP Value: 1,200 per set

Pipe of Answers

When a halfling sits down and smokes this *pipe* with a question in mind, the magic of the *pipe* presents the halfling with an answer. Its effect is identical to the 4th-level priest spell *divination.* To receive an answer, a halfling must smoke the *pipe* for 1 turn; if interrupted, the halfling loses any chance of success. If the halfling remains undisturbed, the *pipe* presents a clue in the form of a cryptic rhyme or omen. There is a 72% chance of a correct answer. If the roll fails, the *pipe* offers no answer. The *pipe of answers* may be used in this way once every 2 days.

XP Value: 2,500 **GP Value:** 5,000

Chimes of the Dragon

Each set of the *chimes of the dragon* comes in a little wooden case. The *chimes* work only when used by a halfling. When tapped together, they produce a gentle tone, but if the command words "awaken fire spirit" are spoken while the *chimes* are tinkling, an illusion of dragon eyes peering out of a globe of shadowy darkness appears. The sound of a dragon's low, menacing growl emanates from the *chimes,* but there is no other effect. The illusion is identical to that produced by an *improved phantasmal force* spell, but it remains active only while the halfling agitates the *chimes.* While doing this, the halfling can only move at half the normal rate as described in the *improved phantasmal force* spell's description. When the *chimes* are first activated, the shadows grow slowly, gradually deepening over a round until at the beginning of the second the dragon's eyes appear. The only drawback to this illusion is the lack of dragon fear. A successful Intelligence check is sufficient to disbelieve the illusion, and witnesses gain a cumulative +1 bonus for disbelief attempts for each round after the second.

XP Value: 2,000 **GP Value:** 2,500

Daisy Chainmail

To any onlooker, this armor appears ridiculous, as it is made up of thousands of daisies linked together. A crochet of blooms forms a delicate chain woven into a hauberk that hangs from the shoulders to just above a halfling's knees. To halflings, however, it is a great gift that the Earth Mother sometimes bestows during the spring and summer festivals. The daisies themselves range in color from purest white to snowy blooms fringed with deepest red.

For defensive purposes, the armor acts like *chainmail +1,* but it weighs virtually nothing. The *mail's* first drawback is its size: No one larger than a halfling can wear it. The second problem is getting in and out of the *mail;* there is a 10% chance that it breaks when donned, becoming useless thereafter. Thus, halflings who are lucky enough to possess *daisy chainmail* tend to wear it all the time, thus preventing any accidental damage. Even with this precaution, the suit is still damaged, so for each day that the armor is worn, half an hour must be spent repairing it. For each hit point of damage the wearer suffers, a turn must be spent tenderly reworking the fine tapestry of flowers. Should repairs be ignored, *daisy chainmail* loses its power after 1 week of use, or when 20 points of damage have been suffered. The last drawback of the *daisy chainmail* is its appearance. Anyone wearing this armor suffers a +3 penalty to reaction rolls when dealing with nonhalfling characters. In hostile encounters, characters are more likely to mistrust the halfling because of his or her "silly" appearance; in nonhostile situations, everyone falls about laughing, leaving the halfling flushed with embarrassment.

XP Value: 1,500 **GP Value:** 11,000

Helm of the Halflings

This item sums up the halfling's attitude perfectly: If it looks like a bowl, then it must be a bowl! On the outside, this item looks like an ordinary conical war helmet (equivalent to a steel cap) with a band of bronze running round the rim. The inside is highly polished metal, and there is no lining, so the *helm* can be uncomfortable. If a halfling takes it off his or her head and turns it upside down, the *helm* acts like an automatic oven, frying pan, or just a general pot for cooking. It automatically adjusts its temperature to suit the situation and remains the same shape throughout cooking, so it is best suited for boiling. The *helm* cooks food at the same rate as if prepared with normal cookware and remains cool on the outside so that it can be handled freely. Should any non-halfling pick it up while it cooks, the *helm* burns the handler's hands as if the *helm* had been resting in flames for an hour or two, inflicting 1d2 points of damage.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 1,300

Nathan is a writer and carpenter living in New Hampshire. He blames all this on the people he knew in college. Andrew lives in Pembrokeshire, West Wales, a land of rolling hills, dim forests, and dragons, where he juggles a geology degree, work, and writing.

D&D® Greatest Hits

giants. EVERYWHERE. big. SO BIG.

The **Dungeons & Dragons®** adventure game engendered a new chapter in gaming.

Twenty-five years later, TSR is celebrating its Silver Anniversary with the re-release of the finest roleplaying products ever produced.

It's all coming back to you.

Return to GEOFF.

You must free the land of Geoff from giants, once and for all. Relive the epic Gary Gygax adventure with this Silver Anniversary edition of "Against the Giants."

A village burns while its attackers flee into the night. Enraged, the King of Keoland orders a warrior to lead a band of adventurers on a retaliatory strike—against the giants.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

TIME TO PLAY.

Questions? Call (800) 324-6496, or visit our website at ‹**www.tsr.com**›.

Baldur's Gate™

The god of murder is dead, but he's left a few choice parts behind.

by
Philip Athans

illustrated by
Dennis Calero

BALDUR'S GATE IS THE STORY OF TWO OF THE SONS of Bhaal, the dead god of murder in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting. One of them is a mercenary who has no idea that the blood of a dead god courses through his veins, and he struggles to master his inner demons. His half-brother is a more savage creature who revels in his portion of Bhaal's legacy and, for his own greater glory, seeks his brother's death—and the destruction of thousands of innocents.

Sarevok has forged an alliance with a cruel Sembian cabal known as the Iron Throne, through which he intends to resurrect his dead father's power within himself. All he needs is a tremendous blood sacrifice. To that end, he has sabotaged the iron mines of the Sword Coast, sowing the seeds of war between the realm of Amn and the powerful city-state of Baldur's Gate.

The legacy of Sarevok's half-brother begins to unfold when two Harper agents visit a learned monk in the great library-fortress of Candlekeep. The monk, Gorion, has been serving as the foster father for another of the children of Bhaal. Abdel Adrian grew up in a monastery, but a powerful bloodlust he never understood led him to the life of a wandering sellsword. When Gorion is brutally murdered by Sarevok's men, Abdel must face his destiny alone, learning to trust an odd assortment of strangers who know more than they are willing to say, more than they seem willing to believe. The mystery ultimately leads to a confrontation with a brother Abdel never knew he had, to prevent the resurrection of a father he couldn't have imagined in his worse nightmares.

The following AD&D® characters are inspired by characters appearing in the bestselling computer game *Baldur's Gate*. Expanded for the novel, they've been revised for use with your FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign.

Here are the sons of Bhaal and the women who risk their lives to turn them away from the blood of the god of murder.

Philip Athans is a gamer, editor, and author whose inner child has been so overstimulated it's starting to take an interest in British television drama and Barbra Streisand movies just to get a break. *He thanks Ray Muzyka at BioWare, and Jess Lebow and Jim Bishop at Wizards of the Coast.*

Abdel Adrian

7TH-LEVEL HUMAN FIGHTER

STRENGTH	19
DEXTERITY	16
CONSTITUTION	18
INTELLIGENCE	10
WISDOM	9
CHARISMA	7
AC	3
THAC0	10
HIT POINTS	82
ALIGNMENT	Chaotic neutral
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Murderous frenzy
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Nil
SIZE	M (6'10")

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Endurance (18), Reading/Writing (11), Swimming (19), Land-based Riding (12), Running (13)

Weapon Proficiencies: Broadsword (specialized), Dagger, Club, Long bow, Battle-ax

Appearance: Nearly 7 feet tall, Abdel is a huge, imposing man of almost 350 lbs., and opponents are usually surprised by his speed and agility. Abdel keeps his dark hair long and his face shaved. His dark eyes are always moving, scanning for any threat, and his skin is sun-bronzed, though he was born of fair, northern stock. Abdel never wears jewelry nor anything like a uniform. He dresses plainly, rarely taking off his simple chain-mail tunic. He carries a small pouch containing a few coins, flint and steel, and little more. Abdel wears his sword strapped to his back and his dagger in a belt sheath.

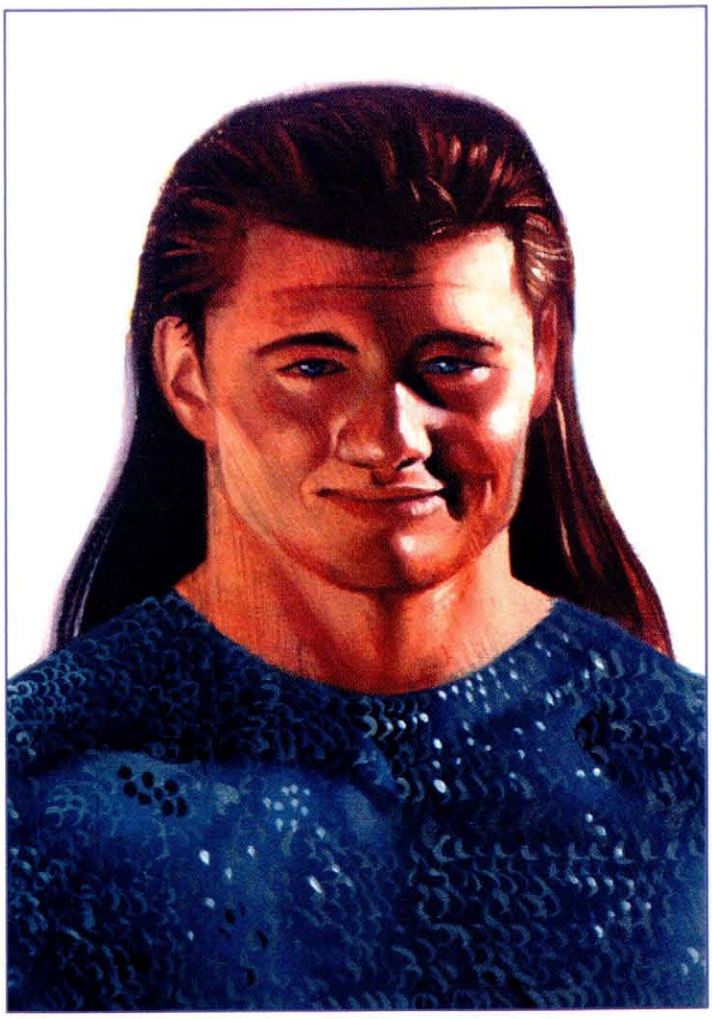
Magical Items: Abdel owns a finely crafted silver dagger with a wide, heavy blade presented to him as a coming-of-age gift by his foster father. This *dagger* +2 is Abdel's most prized possession, even though he has no idea the blade is magical.

Background: Abdel's full name translates from ancient Netherese as "Son of the Dark." This is an appropriate name for a son of Bhaal, the god of murder.

Abdel was born in the Year of the Boot (1343 DR). As an infant, Abdel was rescued from a cult of Deathstalkers by an order of paladins, the Hands of the Loyal Fury. Though the order had intended to kill the unholy spawn, Sir Daesric the Pious simply didn't have it in him to slay an infant. Unwilling to take Abdel into the care of his holy order, Daesric called on an old friend, a priest of Oghma, to raise the child.

Gorion was reluctant at first to take in this strange orphan, but Daesric persuaded him that the child might escape his father's dark legacy if he were raised in the library-fortress of Candlekeep. As Gorion raised Abdel as his own son, the paladins tracked the child's progress, watching for the faintest sign of innate evil. When Bhaal was killed in the Time of Troubles, the paladins lost interest in his offspring.

Abdel grew up with almost superhuman strength and a natural affinity for combat. Gorion tried to educate him as a monk, but Abdel was too independent for that life. He longed for the life of a sellsword. On his seventeenth birthday, a cool autumn day in the Year of the Turret (1360 DR), Abdel bid his foster father good-bye.



Abdel has spent the last eight years traveling up and down the Sword Coast guarding caravans and ships or fighting in any of dozens of petty skirmishes and squabbles between the powerful realms that sprinkle the coast.

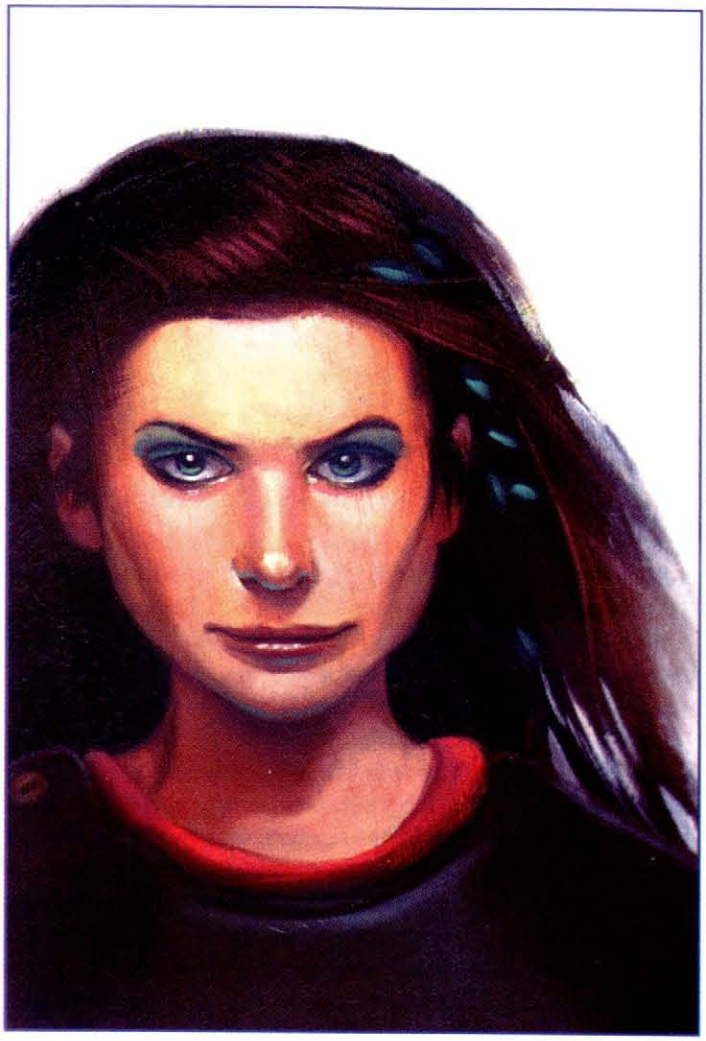
Roleplaying Notes: Abdel doesn't realize why he feels best when locked in mortal combat, because Gorion never told him of his true parentage.

Abdel often comes across as sullen and humorless. He is slow to trust and is extremely cynical for his age. Abdel sees people as petty, corruptible, and selfish.

Bhaal's blood energizes Abdel in a fight. Once he makes his first kill, he enters a murderous frenzy that grants him a cumulative +1 attack and damage bonus and a –1 initiative bonus for each opponent he slays. Those facing Abdel in this state must make saving throws vs. petrification or suffer a –1 penalty to attack and damage rolls and a +1 penalty to initiative.

Abdel backs down from a fight only in the most extreme circumstances. If Jaheira is with him, Abdel gains a saving throw vs. petrification to avoid his murderous frenzy.

Jaheira



9TH/5TH-LEVEL HALF-ELF DRUID/FIGHTER

STRENGTH	15
DEXTERITY	14
CONSTITUTION	17
INTELLIGENCE	10
WISDOM	14
CHARISMA	15
AC	8
THAC0	16
HIT POINTS	61
ALIGNMENT	Neutral
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES	30% resistance to *sleep* and *charm*
SIZE	M (5'5")

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Animal Lore (10), Direction Sense (16), Healing (12), Herbalism (8), Modern Languages—Elvish (10) and Sylph (10), Reading/Writing (11), Survival—Woodland (10), Swimming (15), Tracking (14)

Weapon Proficiencies: Longsword, Knife, Sling

Appearance: Jaheira's dress and accent are decidedly Amnian, though she was actually born in Tethyr. She keeps her tawny hair shoulder length, so it barely covers her gently pointed ears. Her brow is often furrowed in thought. Jaheira wears a scratched leather bustier over a simple underblouse and Amnian trousers. A plain longsword hangs at her waist.

Magical Items: Jaheira is inherently suspicious of magical items and possesses none. She prefers the magic granted by Meilikki in the form of spells.

Background: Jaheira was born in the Year of the Bright Blade (1347 DR) to the second son of a noble family and an elf diplomat. Only weeks old, Jaheira was taken from the city of Zazesspur by a servant girl amid a riot. On the orders of Jaheira's mother, the servant brought the infant north to the edge of the forest of Tethir. The servant died at the edge of the pass, and a group of elves found the infant Jaheira barely clinging to life. The elves brought Jaheira back to Suldanessellar and the care of her mother's family. Jaheira was raised thinking her aunt Faenyar was her mother.

When Jaheira was ten, her mother suddenly reappeared, but a frightened Jaheira refused to believe this stranger was her real mother. Rather than live with her, young Jaheira insisted on being sent to study in the temple of Meilikki.

Jaheira thrived in the temple, but she was uncomfortable in the elf city and always curious about her human father. When word came from a Harper agent that her father might have survived the civil war, fifteen-year-old Jaheira left to search for her father in the Amnian city of Keczulla.

The pace of the human realm of Amn was an eye-opening experience to Jaheira. Though intimidated at first, she soon learned to make her way among the humans and found the society of Amn refreshing and exciting. Though she never found her father, she settled in Keczulla and befriended Charessa Keel, an experienced swordswoman and Harper agent.

Charessa recruited Jaheira into the ranks of the Harpers and helped her enlist in the army. Her army training and tutoring from Charessa instilled in Jaheira a surprising skill with the longsword. During a spy mission, she met Khalid, another Harper posing as a general's aide-de-camp.

When the pair finally uncovered the evidence necessary to condemn the general, they found themselves in a harrowing chase that took them from one end of Amn to the other. It was during that time that Jaheira and Khalid fell in love. They were married soon after returning to Keczulla.

Roleplaying Notes: Above all else, Jaheira is a dedicated agent of the Harpers. So far, the desires of the Harpers have not conflicted with her religious beliefs. Jaheira can be rash, preferring a straight-line course through any problem. She's a staunch defender of the natural world but feels more comfortable in the cities of Amn.

Her principal contact with the Harpers is still Charessa Keel. Jaheira has no idea that it is Laeral herself who has taken an interest in her and was responsible for the false rumor that led her to Kezculla in the first place. Why the Lady Mage of Waterdeep is so interested in Jaheira is a tale for another time.

11TH-LEVEL HUMAN NINJA SHADOW WARRIOR

STRENGTH	17
DEXTERITY	18
CONSTITUTION	14
INTELLIGENCE	12
WISDOM	10
CHARISMA	15
AC	3
THAC0	10
HIT POINTS	49
ALIGNMENT	Lawful neutral
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Backstab damage ×4, 2 attacks/round
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Nil
SIZE	M (5'3")

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, Endurance (16), Etiquette (15), Jumping (18), Modern Language—Common (12), Running (8), Tumbling (18)

Weapon Proficiencies: Katana (specialized), Ninjutsu (specialized), Ninja-to

Thieving Skills: Pick Pockets 25%, Open Locks 25%, Find/Remove Traps 30%, Move Silently 95%, Hide in Shadows 95%, Detect Noise 65%, Climb Walls 85%, Read Languages 20%

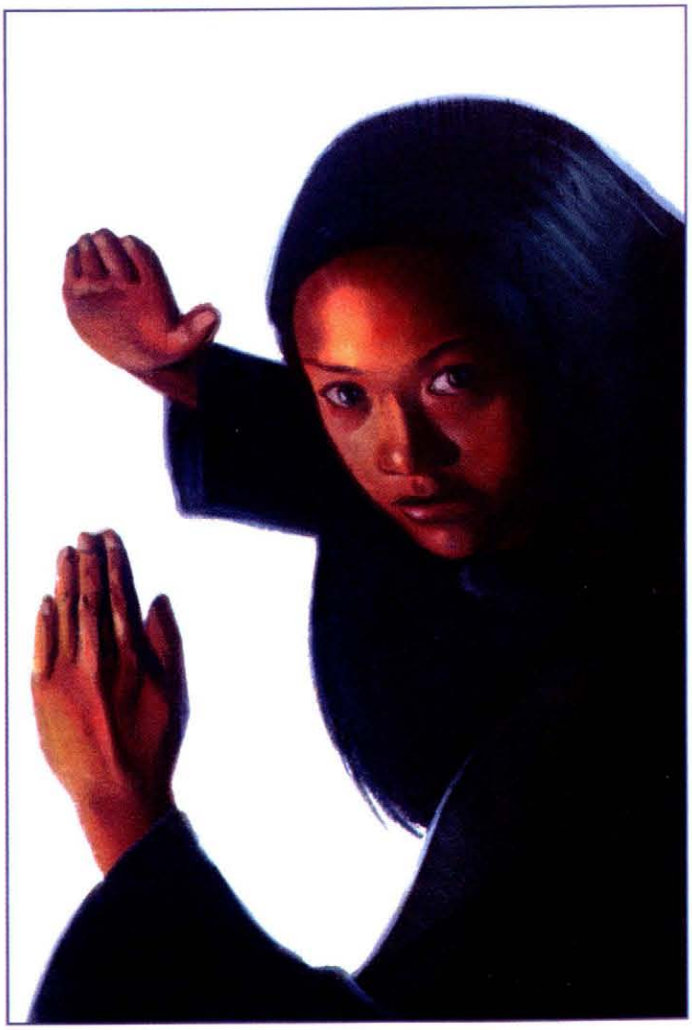
Appearance: Tamoko is a small Kozakuran woman with impressive hidden strength. In backward areas of Faerûn she's often mistaken for an elf, but the resemblance is superficial at best. Her long, straight hair is as black as pitch, and her skin is soft and smooth, unblemished by scars.

She dresses in a simple black silk bodysuit that she can adjust to go from loose and blousy to form-fitting. She never wears metal armor and has no jewelry or any reflective surfaces on her person except the blade of her extraordinary, curved sword. She wears soft-soled black sandles or no shoes at all. Sewn into the collar of her night-suit is a masked hood that, when she chooses to wear it, covers all but her eyes.

Magical Items: The black silk night-suit was a gift from her clan master and acts like a *robe of protection +3*. Her *katana +3* is one of the finest ever crafted by the swordsmiths of Kozakura.

Background: Tamoko was born in 1350 DR in the village of Kiraan on the west coast of the island of Mikedono. The third of three girls, she was sold by her disappointed father to the Konishi Clan, who noticed a raw talent in the four-year-old Tamoko and her sister. The girls were trained in the art of ninjutsu at the Konishi Clan dojo in the mountains east of Chimotoge. Both took to the training well, and Tamoko grew to become a ninja of note, bringing honor and respect to her clan.

One night, Tamoko was sent to kill a high-ranking wu jen. Somehow the wu jen was forewarned of her coming. Tamoko not only failed to kill him but was surprised by his magic. She



was pushed into a dimensional portal that opened into a madhouse on an island near the Amnian city of Athkatla. She escaped the island and disappeared into the city.

Fearing the retribution of her dishonored clan as well as the wrathful wu jen, Tamoko fled the city and headed north. By the time she reached Baldur's Gate, she was working as an assassin and had begun to attract the attention of several of the more dangerous power groups—including the Iron Throne.

Eventually, Tamoko met Sarevok, who became her teacher, lover, and employer. She has lived with him in a labyrinth of passages, tunnels, and rooms under the city of Baldur's Gate ever since. She wishes she could return home but knows she has lost her honor, so she has devoted herself to Sarevok.

Roleplaying Notes: Tamoko is a highly trained assassin—a killing machine of the first order. She is, even after her years of service to Sarevok, a professional.

Tamoko speaks with a thick accent and speaks little, and then very slowly. This is as much a part of her training and practiced calm as it is a discomfort with the Common tongue of Faerûn, which is a language she's still learning.

If Tamoko is pressed into a fight she didn't initiate, she disappears into the darkness at her first opportunity. She never allows herself to be at a disadvantage in combat. If she is sent to kill, she appears suddenly, kills quickly, then disappears again.

Sarevok

15TH-LEVEL HUMAN FIGHTER

STRENGTH	18/00
DEXTERITY	17
CONSTITUTION	18
INTELLIGENCE	15
WISDOM	14
CHARISMA	15
AC	–4
THAC0	–6
HIT POINTS	125
ALIGNMENT	Chaotic evil
SPECIAL ATTACKS	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES	90% resistance to fire, lightning, acid, and cold
SIZE	M (6'7")

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Blind-fighting, Endurance (18), Etiquette (17), Reading/Writing (17), Religion (14), Swimming (18)

Weapon Proficiencies: Two-handed Sword (specialized), Dagger, Heavy Crossbow, Halberd, Longsword, Whip

Appearance: Sarevok is a large and intimidating man with a deep, resonant voice. He keeps his raven black hair cropped close, his face cleanly shaven, and his dress neat. When he is angered, his eyes flash with an inhuman yellow glow.

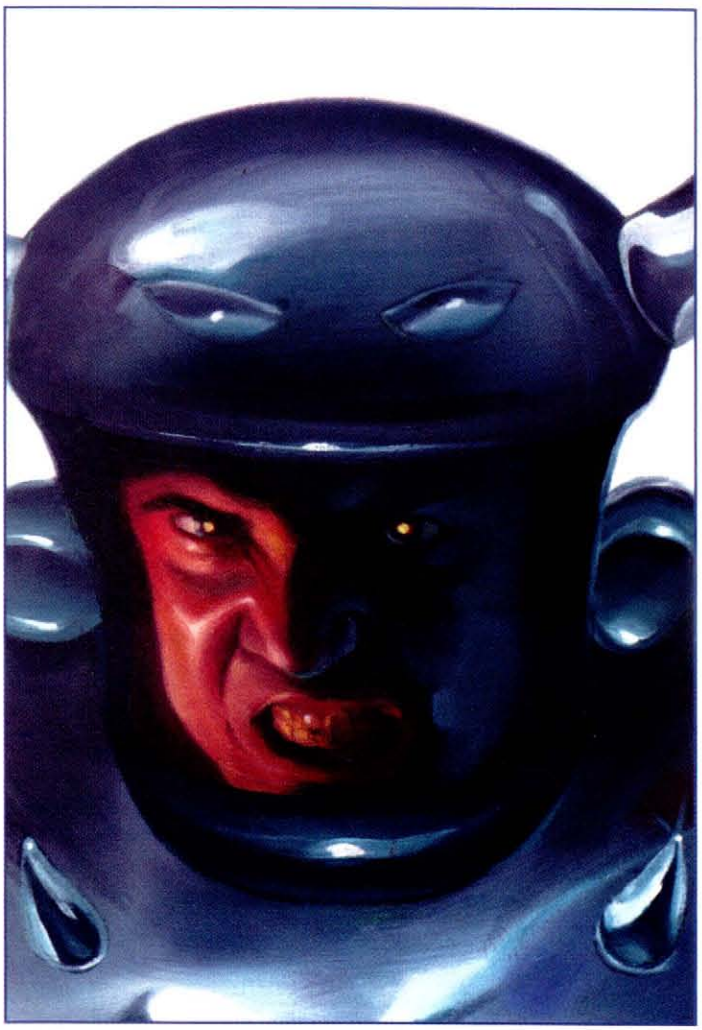
Though he easily moves about the city of Baldur's Gate and has even—through his contacts with the Iron Throne—managed to attain a level of power and influence sufficient to put him in the line of ducal succession, Sarevok is finding it more and more difficult to pass for a normal human.

Magical Items: Sarevok's *platemail +4* is said to have been created by Bhaal himself. It provides 90% resistance to fire, lightning, acid, and cold. The gauntlets act as a *ring of spell storing*, holding up to twelve levels of wizard spells. To use that function, both of the wearer's hands must be free as the gauntlets form the complex patterns necessary to cast the desired spell. To aid this function, Sarevok's matching *two-handed sword +3* can be left to float in the air by his side for up to 3 rounds.

Sarevok keeps track of his many agents through the Frame of Taerez-Zeez, a magical device that allows only Sarevok to converse with or spy upon certain programmed individuals.

Background: Sarevok's mother was a priestess in the service of Bhaal and a high-ranking Zhentarim agent sent to infiltrate her husband's organization, the Iron Throne. She escaped the paladins who sought to slay the spawn of Bhaal. When she returned home with what was obviously a bastard son, her husband, Reiltar, had her killed. Reiltar's contacts informed him of Sarevok's parentage, so he spared the infant's life, certain that he would someday be of use to the Iron Throne.

Sarevok was sent to Yhaunn, where he was placed in a small, exclusive military academy. This loveless upbringing, peppered with visits from mad cultists, nurtured Sarevok's dark



nature. Sarevok took to his military training well, and it kept him from descending into homicidal mania.

Eventually, a priest of Bhaal visited Serevok on the eve of his graduation, revealing the secret of Sarevok's parentage and inviting him into the Zhentarim. Young Sarevok had other plans, however, and left the priest of Bhaal behind, in pieces.

Sarevok found Reiltar and persuaded him to allow Sarevok to begin working for the Iron Throne. Over the next several years, Sarevok impressed Reiltar and others in the Iron Throne as much as he frightened them. When Reiltar needed someone to lead a new operation hundreds of miles from Sembia, he offered the job to Sarevok.

Roleplaying Notes: Sarevok rarely makes his presence known directly. He is surrounded by a veritable army of thugs, spies, assassins, dopplegangers, humanoids, slavers, and outlaws. Sarevok has influence at the highest level within the Iron Throne, as well as the power structure of Baldur's Gate. He even has agents of the Zhentarim working on his behalf.

Sarevok is quick to anger and not as infallible as those around him believe. He is driven to the point of obsession with the completion of a ritual that will awaken in him the lost power of Bhaal. He believes that by completing this ritual he will become Bhaal, the risen god of murder. This ritual requires a massive sacrifice—murder, on a grand scale.

Knights of the Dinner Table™

IS A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

WHY HAVEN'T YOU SUBSCRIBED YET??

NOW EXPANDED TO 40 PAGES!!!

OKAY, BOB, SO THE SEWER GOPHER RIPS YER HEAD CLEAN OFF. THEN HE SHOVES IT IN A SACK. AND BEATS IT AGAINST THE SIDES OF THE SEWER TUNNEL UNTIL A BLOODY GOO OOZES FROM THE BAG.
DAMMIT! I TOLD YOU TALKIN' TO THIS GUY WASN'T GOING TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING. NOW HE'S GOT MY HEAD IN A SACK!
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO WAVE THE FLAG OF TRUCE - NOT POKE HIM IN THE CHEST WITH IT TO EMPHASIZE YOUR WORDS.
BOB, YELLING, "YOU GOT SOME-THING TO SAY TO ME, MISTER BUTT-UGLY?" IS NOT WHAT I'D CALL PARLEYING.
IT'S NOT BOB'S FAULT. HE JUST LOST HIS HEAD! HAR HAR.

IN ADDITION TO **SEVERAL ORIGINAL STORIES** OF THE ONGOING ADVENTURES OF YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTERS (UNIQUE FROM THOSE APPEARING HERE IN DRAGON™), KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE™ MAGAZINE FEATURES OTHER ARTICLES OF INTEREST TO GAMERS INCLUDING:

- **TALES FROM THE TABLE**: FUNNY STORIES OF LIFE AT THE GAMING TABLE
- **A GAMER'S VIEW OF THE MOVIES**: MOVIE REVIEWS FOR GUYS LIKE US
- **HEARD IT ON THE GAMEVINE**: GAME VINE IS A COLUMN WHERE YOU CAN PUT AN EAR TO THE WALL AND CATCH UP ON WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE GAME INDUSTRY. MONTH TO MONTH WE PLUCK CHOICE BITS OF NEWS, GOSSIP AND RUMOR AND GATHER THEM TOGETHER TO RUN HERE FOR YOUR READING ENJOYMENT.
- **BRIAN'S SMALL PRESS PICKS**: MR. VAN HOOSE REVIEWS THE BEST OF SMALL PRESS PUBLICATIONS.
- **GAMIN' DICK'S BACK ROOM**: A SOUNDING BOARD WHERE GAMERS CAN GIVE THEIR TWO-CENTS' WORTH ON WHATEVER SEEMS TO RILE THEM.
- **PARTING SHOTS**: ONE LAST JAB AT YER FUNNY BONE ON THE WAY OUT THE DOOR

A ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION (12 ISSUES) IS ONLY $32.00!!!

(US $36.00 IN CANADA AND US $50 OVERSEAS)

THE WAIT IS OVER!!

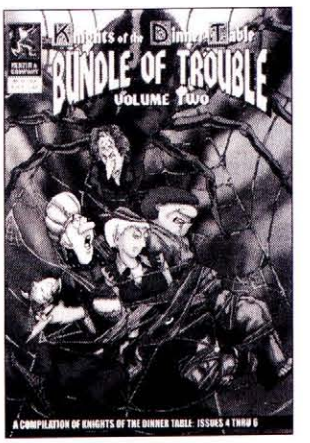
Bundle of Trouble #2 is a complete compilation of KoDT issues #4-#6 plus the extra goodies you expect from us. Available in stores this April or order directly from Kenzer and Company. Only $9.95.

To purchase a subscription or **a sample issue** ($3.50) or Bundle of Trouble #2 ($9.95 + $2 S/H), send a check or money order (made payable to **Kenzer and Company**) to:

Kenzer & Company
Mail Order Fulfillments
2094 Camino a los Cerros, Menlo Park, CA 94025

or fax a valid Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover card number, card type and expiration date to us at **(650) 233-8270** or E-mail the same information to us at **kenzerco@aol.com**

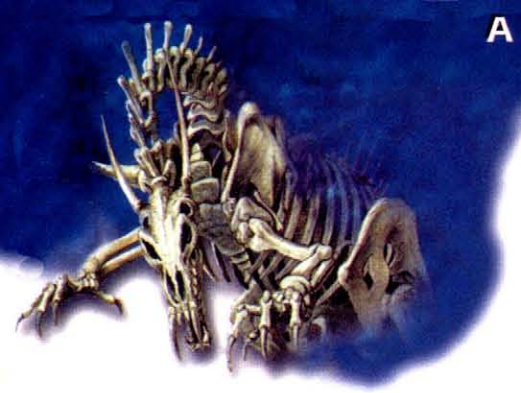
Knights of the Dinner Table™ magazine was voted **Best Professional Games Magazine** by the **YOU** the gaming public!! Thanks!!



E-mail: kenzerco@aol.com

On the Web: http://members.aol.com/relkin/kenzerco.html

© Copyright 1999 Kenzer and Company. All rights reserved.
Legal Notice: The Kenzer and Company Logo, Tales from the Vault, Bundle of Trouble, Knights of the Dinner Table and all prominent characters and likenesses thereof are trademarks of Kenzer and Company.



Spielbuk Spayle's Book of Spellbook Spells

For wizards who can't stop reading in the tub ...

by
Johnathan Richards

illustrated by
Bob Klasnich

THE FIRST TIME, A STREAM DID IT. The wizard was careless in crossing and lost his footing while hopping from stone to stone. The cold water soaked him to the bone, but it wasn't until that night that he realized the spell formulae carefully recorded into his spellbook were now runny smears of ink. Fortunately, that was early in his career and he was able to recover the lost spells by recopying them from other sources.

The second time, it was a red dragon. This occurred much later, when he was more powerful and had discovered the value of maintaining duplicate spellbooks. Still, it irritated him that one blast from the great beast roasted his spellbook to ashes—even more so than the fact that he had been badly burned in the attack. He learned a valuable lesson—flesh can easily be healed (especially when one travels with powerful members of the priesthood), but spellbooks are fragile things, easily damaged or destroyed.

The rest of the wizard's career was an attempt to remedy this sad fact. He spent countless hours in spell research, designing spells that would protect a wizard's most valuable possessions—spellbooks. The wizard's real name is lost to time, but in a fit of whimsy, he took the pseudonym "Spielbuk Spayle" when documenting his discoveries. Thus, his ultimate compendium of spellbook-related magics is known today as *Spielbuk Spayle's Book of Spellbook Spells.*

The book measures 1' × 1½' × 1½". It has covers of red dragonhide stretched and bound over fragrant sandalwood. Legend has it that the hide is from the same dragon responsible for the destruction of Spielbuk's second spellbook, but the size of the scales indicates a much smaller creature, probably not too many years out of the egg. In any case, the book includes all of the spellbook-related spells that Spielbuk devised during his later years, a few common "spellbook" spells known to many wizards, and notes about spellbook construction at the end of the book.

The first page of the book has a drawing of a tiny skull with a single word written above it in red: "CROTOMAR." Anyone holding the book open to this page who says the word "crotomar" aloud activates two spell effects: First, the skull drawing enlarges to that of a human skull and opens its mouth wide; second, a *magic mouth* activates with a blood-curdling scream. This practical joke seems to be in character for a wizard willing to be known throughout the ages as "Spielbuk Spayle" just for the sake of a bad pun.

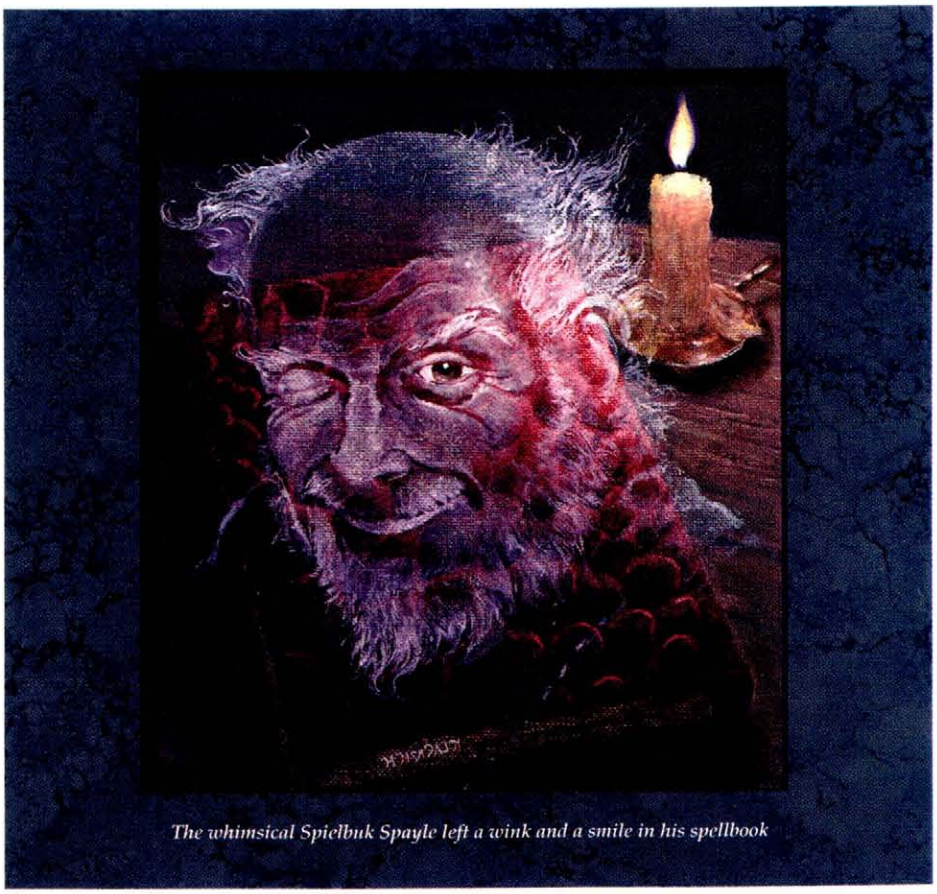
Read backward, the word "crotomar" is "ramotorc." This is the command word that activates *Spielbuk's pocket spellbook* spell placed upon the magical tome;

when the spellbook is held by a wizard and "ramotorc" is spoken aloud, the book disappears and is replaced with a tiny (1" wide) replica. This miniature book is likewise covered in red dragonhide (believed to be from the same creature whose flesh binds the full-size spellbook), and when opened, the word "CROTOMAR" can be seen on the first page in tiny red letters. The other pages of the mini-spellbook are blank, but when "ramotorc" is said while holding the replica, it disappears and is replaced by the full-size spellbook.

The first several dozen pages of the work are "spellbook-related" spells, in alphabetical order according to spell level (no doubt the result of an *organize spellbook* spell): *animate drawing*, copy* (from *The Complete Wizard's Handbook*), *erase, organize spellbook*, protection from bookworms*, protection from liquids*, read magic; ink transfer*; explosive runes, illusionary script, ink luminescence*, secret page, sepia snake sigil; fire trap; avoidance, damage link*, Leomund's secret chest, Spielbuk's pocket spellbook; temporal corridor*; symbol.* Spells with an asterisk (*) after them were devised by Spielbuk himself; details of these spells follow.

After the pages of spell formulae, the last remaining pages are devoted to further thoughts on spellbook defense. A treatise on the benefits of different hides used as spellbook covers details the advantages of several types of dragonskins (offering the spellbook a limited protection appropriate to the dragon type—red dragonskin protects against heat damage, blue dragonskin protects against electricity, and so forth), trollskin (allowing the book's cover—but not the pages within—to "regenerate" damage over time), and skulkskin (providing the spellbook a chameleon-like ability to change color and blend in with its environment).

The final page is a drawing of the head and shoulders of a bearded man in a wizard's robes, presumably a portrait of Spielbuk himself. When the book is opened to the last page and the name "Spielbuk" is said aloud, the wizard in the portrait faces the book's holder and winks, then returns to his original position. This is a fitting tribute to the whimsical individual responsible for the *animate drawing* spell. No doubt knowing that his likeness would be around after his death to wink at the book's new owners gave the old wizard much pleasure.



The whimsical Spielbuk Spayle left a wink and a smile in his spellbook

The book itself resists damage remarkably well, as it has been *damage linked* to a large rock in Spielbuk's back garden. Thus, *Spielbuk Spayle's Book of Spellbook Spells* makes all item saving throws as "rock" (see Table 29: Item Saving Throws in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*).

Animate Drawing

(Alteration)
Level: 1
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: One drawing
Saving Throw: None

By means of an *animate drawing* spell, the wizard causes an inked picture to move in a preprogrammed fashion: A drawing of a dancing girl can wiggle and gyrate; a picture of a skull can gnash its teeth and look menacing; a hand-drawn colony of ants can move about and form a word with their bodies. The spell is begun as the wizard first sets pen to paper. As he draws the original picture, he continues with the verbal components to the spell. Once the original picture is completed, the utterance of the command word makes the picture fade until it can barely be seen, then the wizard continues chanting the verbal components while he draws the final configuration of the animated drawing. When the final picture is complete, the command word finishes the spell. At that point the completed picture vanishes completely, to be replaced by the original drawing.

From then on, anyone holding the animated drawing and saying the command word causes the drawing to move upon the page, shifting into its final configuration (the wizard's second drawing). The spell is often used as an amusement, but it can also be used to impress the ignorant or hide a secret message (the picture could "morph" into words, as in the ant example above, or a man in a drawing in the wizard's study might point to the location of a secret door in the room).

Organize Spellbook

(Alteration)
Level: 1
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: One spellbook or pile of spell scrolls
Saving Throw: None

An *organize spellbook* spell allows for the reshuffling of spells within a spellbook. For example, a wizard's spellbook contains four 1st-level spells and two 2nd-level spells. The wizard then learns another 1st-level spell that he wishes to transcribe into his spellbook. Doing so puts the new 1st-level spell out of sequence after the two 2nd-level spells. With an *organize spellbook* spell, the spells on the pages of the spellbook are placed in alphabetical order by level, making it easier for the wizard to locate and reference a particular spell (especially at higher levels, when the wizard no doubt has many books filled with spells of disparate levels scattered throughout).

Optionally, the spell can be cast upon a stack of wizard spell scrolls. In this case, the wizard has the option of organizing the spells on the scrolls into alphabetical order, or he can call out the name of a spell and it will automatically be shuffled to the top. This is a handy spell for the wizard who traditionally travels with numerous spell scrolls and a situation arises where he needs a particular spell in a hurry.

Protect your spellbook from bookworms and other pesky creatures.

Protection from Bookworms

(Abjuration)
Level: 1
Range: 20 feet
Components: V, S, M
Duration: One week/level
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: One 10' cube/level or one book/level
Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, a magical barrier is created that repels bookworms, silverfish, cockroaches, rot grubs, gohei p'oh (see *Monstrous Compendium® 6: Kara-Tur Appendix*, "P'oh, Gohei"), and other creatures that eat paper and parchment. The barrier is fixed in place, so the spell is usually cast in libraries, dens, and other places where important books are kept. Books removed from the area of protection are no longer protected from such creatures.

The spell can also be cast upon a single book. In this case, the protection is provided to the book no matter where it is taken. This version of the spell is most often reserved for the wizard's personal spellbooks, while his library at home receives the area effect version of the spell.

Ink Transfer

(Alteration)
Level: 2
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round/level of wizard
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: One spellbook
Saving Throw: None

An *ink transfer* spell is useful in transferring a written spell from one spellbook to another. When the spell is cast upon a page from a spellbook, the written symbols making up the spell formula run together and merge, creating a single unbroken thread that the wizard can pick up and place upon another page of the same (or a different) spellbook. Once the "ink-strand" touches the new page and is released by the wizard, it reforms into the symbols of the spell formula as inscribed on the original page.

An *ink transfer* spell allows a wizard to "save" the undamaged pages of a partially destroyed spellbook. In conjunction with an *organize spellbook* spell, the *ink transfer* allows the wizard to move his spells around from one spellbook to another, creating a separate spellbook for each spell level if he so desires, with the spells in each book listed in alphabetical order.

Note that this spell is useful only on those spell formulae transcribed onto paper with magical inks; it has no effect upon those recorded in other formats, such as spells etched into metal plates, carved into clay tablets, and so on.

Given that many wizards do not wish to devote a "spell slot" to such pedestrian and organizational spells, both the *ink transfer* and *organize spellbook* spells are often learned by low-level "hedge wizards," who cast the spells on their fellow wizards' spellbooks for a nominal fee. For those wizards wishing a steady income without the dangers inherent in the life of an adventuring mage, the profession has much to offer.

Ink Luminescence

(Alteration)
Level: 3
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: One spell, as it is transcribed into a spellbook
Saving Throw: None

The *ink luminescence* spell is a specialized version of the handy *continual light* spell. It is cast on a vial of ink immediately before transcribing a known spell into a spellbook. Once this is done, the wizard writes the spell formula into the spellbook as normal. Once it is complete, the wizard can "activate" the *ink luminescence* spell at will. Upon utterance of a command word, the symbols of the spell formula glow slightly. While this does not provide enough light to see by, it is bright enough for the wizard to make out the spell formula in an area of absolute (nonmagical) darkness. This allows the wizard to memorize spells in an area with no other illumination: deep in a cave network, inside an underground cell, and so forth. A second utterance of the command word shuts off the illumination.

A separate casting of the *ink luminescence* spell is required for each different spell transcribed into a wizard's spellbook, as a different magical ink is required for each new spell. However, the wizard can use the same command word in each casting of the ink luminescence spell, so that the same word "activates" all of the spells in his spellbook and "extinguishes" them all when done. There is no limit to the number of times a spell formula's illumination can be "switched on and off," although a *dispel*

magic cast directly upon a spellbook permanently negates the properties of the *ink luminescence* spell.

Protection from Liquids

(Abjuration)
Level: 3
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 turn + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Object touched
Saving Throw: None

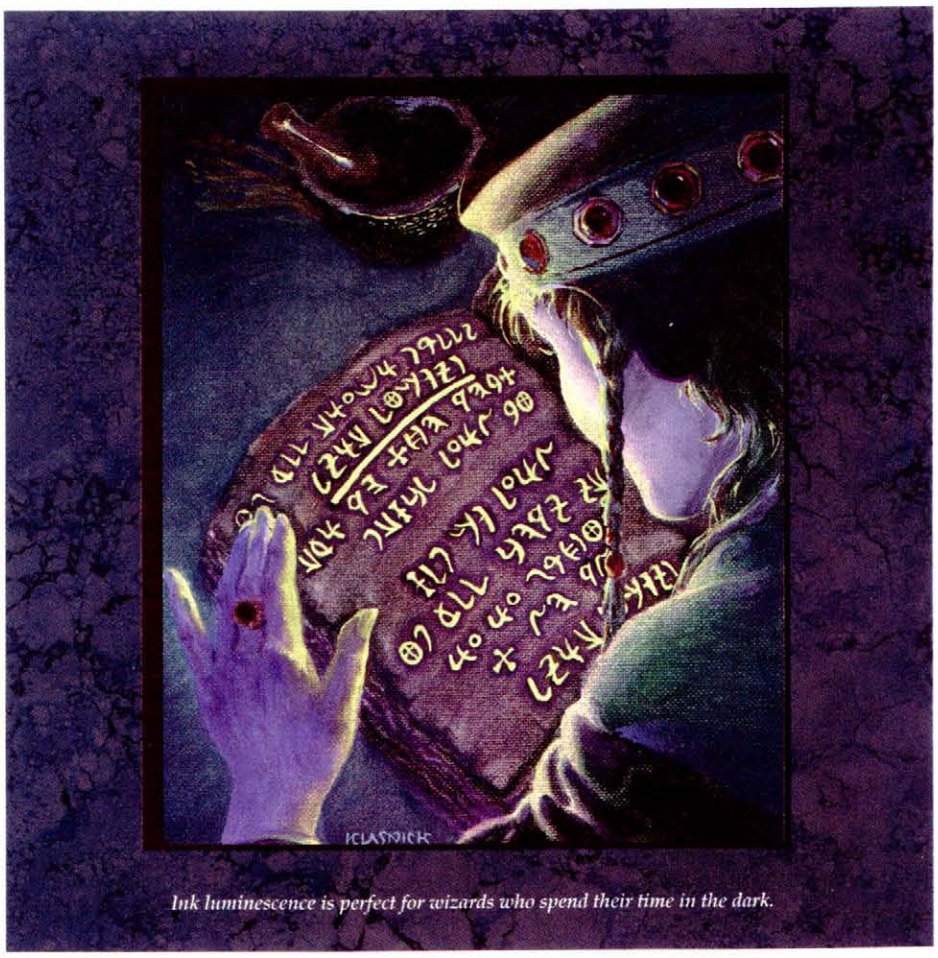
When this spell is cast upon an object, a magical barrier forms around the item that protects it from all liquids. Thus, a spellbook so protected could be dropped into a pool of water and, upon retrieval, the pages would be bone-dry. The spell works against all liquids, even those of a corrosive nature such as acid (although retrieving a protected spellbook from the bottom of a pool of acid might be problematic). Spielbuk devised this spell after losing his first spellbook to a dunk in a stream; after creating the *protection from liquids* spell, he was sure to cast it upon his spellbook immediately before entering an area where immersion in water could threaten the safety of his valued tome.

The object to be protected by the spell need not be a spellbook; any portable object physically smaller than the wizard casting the spell may have a *protection from liquids* spell cast upon it; however, the spell does not work upon living beings. It is useful when fighting foes with acidic or otherwise dangerous blood (like the greater medusa)—casting this spell upon the weapon used against the creature protects it from the blood's effects. Similarly, casting the spell upon a shield grants it immunity from ranged acid attacks (such as that of the ankheg or the breath weapon of a black dragon) and other liquid-based ranged attacks (like an eyewing's poisonous "tear" attack).

The material component of the spell is a handful of dust, which is sprinkled over the item to be protected

Damage Link

(Alteration, Conjuration/Summoning)
Level: 5
Range: Touch



Ink luminescence is perfect for wizards who spend their time in the dark.

Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: Two linked objects, each no bigger than a 3' × 3' × 3' cube
Saving Throw: None

A *damage link* spell creates a permanent connection between two nonliving objects. From that point on, any attack upon one object is automatically reflected upon the other; thus a spellbook *damage linked* to a large stone can be placed in a bonfire without harm, as the spellbook is now immune to the flames. (The "linked" stone would grow steadily hotter as a result of such an action.)

The two objects linked by the spell must be about the same size and shape. An object to be linked cannot be more than 3 feet long, nor can it differ in size by more than 6 inches with the object to which it will be linked. (A 2' × 3' spellbook, for instance, could not be damage linked to a ⅛" diamond.) The *damage link* works both ways, so a spellbook linked to a stone would be destroyed if acid were spilled upon the stone.

The properties of the linked object only apply when one of the two linked objects is damaged. A spellbook linked to a piece of wood wouldn't float when placed in water, for example, nor would a spellbook linked to a stone weigh as much as the stone.

Once one of the two objects is destroyed, the link is permanently broken and the remaining object suffers damage as normal. For example, a spellbook linked to a stone is dropped into a vat of acid. The spellbook is fine, while the stone begins to bubble and dissolve. When the stone is completely dissolved, the link shatters, and the spellbook begins to dissolve as well.

Spielbuk created this spell specifically so that his spellbooks could be linked to sturdy objects capable of taking massive damage before being destroyed, although there are other uses for the spell. For example, *damage link* is a favored spell of mage/assassins: The wicked spellcaster need only link two sheets of paper together; one he gives to his target in the form of a letter, the other

he retains himself. Once the letter has been placed in the victim's pocket, the other piece of paper is set afire, causing the victim's clothing to burn. For an even surer kill, the assassin can link an article of the victim's clothing to something flammable. This spell allows the assassin to be nowhere near the victim at the time of his death, which makes a good alibi.

The spell can also be used to create traps and diversions. As an example, imagine a small barrel of oil *damage linked* to a rock of similar size. The barrel is placed with others of its type in a castle storage room. At the right time, a simple torch or *burning hands* spell applied to the rock ignites the barrel, setting off an enormous explosion as the other barrels and their contents go up in flame as well.

A red dragon's fiery breath led Spielbuk Spayle to the development of *Temporal Corridor.*

Spielbuk's Pocket Spellbook

(Alteration, Conjuration/Summoning)
Level: 5
Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: One spellbook
Saving Throw: None

Spielbuk's pocket spellbook came about as a result of Spielbuk's mistrust of the *Leomund's secret chest* spell. While he loved the concept of storing his spellbook in a magical chest on the Ethereal Plane, he didn't like the idea that there were creatures there who might discover the chest and steal his spellbook. Granted, the possibility was a small one, but Spielbuk was ever wary when it came to protecting his magical tomes.

Therefore, he took the concept one step further. Rather than store his spellbook in the Ethereal Plane where it could be found, he decided to place it in the safety of a *portable hole*. Realizing that his *portable hole* could just as easily be stolen from him, he modified Leomund's *secret chest* replica idea and, in effect, created a magical way of "locking" a *portable hole*.

The *Spielbuk's pocket spellbook* spell requires a tiny replica of the spellbook to be safeguarded as a material component. It must be made of the same material as the larger spellbook, and regardless of the size it must be made to scale. Once completed, the larger book is placed into the *portable hole*, the spell's words are spoken, and the *portable hole* disappears forever. As a result of the *Spielbuk's pocket spellbook* spell, the *portable hole* is now a conduit linking the full-sized spellbook with its tiny replica. When the wizard holds the replica in his hand and speaks the command word (incorporated into the original casting of the spell), the replica vanishes and is instantaneously replaced with the original spellbook. The process works in reverse as well: By repeating the command word, the spellbook is stored safely in the extra-dimensional space, and the wizard has only his tiny spellbook replica to worry about.

Traditionally, the command word is written on the first page of the tiny replica, but this is not a requirement of the spell. In any case, the pages of the spellbook replica are otherwise blank, and new spells can be added to the full-size spellbook without requiring further enhancements to the replica.

The advantages of using this spell are many. A tiny spellbook replica is generally easier to safeguard than the full-sized book: It can be easily concealed on the wizard's person, sealed in a watertight container if the wizard will be traveling over (or under) water, and it is lighter and less of a burden to carry over great distances (especially if the full-sized spellbook is made of nonstandard materials—etched plates of metal, for example). On the other hand, it requires the use of a *portable hole* as a material spell component (which, once the spell is cast, can never be used again in its standard fashion), and the tiny replica is more easily lost or misplaced than the full-sized spellbook.

Temporal Corridor

(Alteration)
Level: 6
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: See below
Casting Time: 6
Area of Effect: One small object touched by the wizard
Saving Throw: None

The *temporal corridor* spell opens a small passage through time, through which the wizard can send a small object he is able to lift in one hand. The corridor sends the nonliving object ahead in time (but not in space) as many minutes as the wizard wishes, subject to an upper limit of 3 minutes/level. Thus, a 15th-level wizard could hurl an object forward in time 1 minute, 45 minutes, or anywhere in between. The temporal duration of the corridor must be decided when the spell is cast; a wizard cannot just throw an object forward in time and then retrieve it whenever he wants. If he throws something ahead 30 minutes, he'll have to be there at the same spot in 30 minutes to retrieve it.

Only nonliving matter can be placed into a *temporal corridor* spell. Living creatures cannot enter the corridor, nor can spell effects—a wizard couldn't cast a *fireball* spell through a temporal corridor, for instance, to have it activate and explode a half hour later. The object to be placed into the corridor must be lifted by one hand by the wizard, without the assistance of a *ring of telekinesis, potion of strength,* or similar magics. The object traveling through a *temporal corridor* loses all initial momentum, so a thrown dagger would "pop" back into normal time at the end of the spell and fall to the ground.

Spielbuk designed this spell after the loss of his second spellbook, which was destroyed by a red dragon's fiery breath. Had he developed the spell earlier, he realized, he could have "thrown" his spellbook ahead in time, dealt with the dragon, and then been on hand when the spellbook "popped out" of the *temporal corridor.*

Johnathan M. Richards was somewhat disappointed that Spielbuk failed to create an organize comic book collection *spell. Such a spell is desperately needed in the Richards household.*

Here there be dragons...

... and spells, magical items and monsters, character kits, weapons and powers, and proficiencies ...

DRAGON® Magazine expands the AD&D® universe each month with game articles you can use in your own campaign. Each issue also includes the latest game and book reviews, Sage Advice, interviews with your favorite authors and artists, and more!

Return this subscription form today—
You don't want to miss a single exciting month!

Fill out this form and mail it, with your payment, to the address below. *(Send U.S. funds only)*

Name_____

Address _____

City_____ State/Prov._____

Country_____ Zip/Postal Code_____

Method of Payment:

☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA

Credit Card Number_____

MC Bank No. _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature_____ Date _____

Mail this card with payment to:
DRAGON Magazine
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 469107
Escondido, CA 92046-9107
or Fax to: 425-204-5928

Subscribers in the U.S. and Canada will receive their first issues within 8 to 10 weeks.
All prices are subject to change without notice.

Save up to 46% off Newsstand price!

Subscription Type:

☐ New ☐ Renewal (enclose mailing label)

To U.S. addresses

☐ 1 year (12 issues) for $34.95
☐ 2 years (24 issues) for $63.95
☐ 3 years (36 issues) for $89.95

To Canadian addresses

☐ 1 year (12 issues) for $41.95
☐ 2 years (24 issues) for $75.95
☐ 3 years (36 issues) for $103.95

To foreign addresses

☐ 1 year (12 issues), surface mail, for $57.95

DRADM98

DRAGON is a registered trademark of TSR, Inc. © 1998 TSR, Inc. All rights reserved.

Creatures of Torment

Baldur's Gate was only the beginning. Now you can explore the Outer Planes in Interplay's new *PLANESCAPE®: Torment.*

by
Chris Avellone

illustrated by
Eric Campanella

DEVELOPED BY INTERPLAY'S BLACK ISLE STUDIOS division, *PLANESCAPE®: Torment* uses the Bioware Infinity Engine first seen in *Baldur's Gate* to bring the Planes to your personal computer. In the game, you assume the role of a scarred, amnesiac immortal in search of his identity. From an awakening on the slabs of Sigil's Mortuary to journeys across the Outlands and the Outer Planes, *Torment* introduces you to the forces of faith and belief that govern the PLANESCAPE multiverse.

In this game, death is not simply that minute of irritation while you reload a saved game. In *Torment*, death serves to advance the plot and is even a tool for solving seemingly impossible problems. As an immortal, your character can regenerate from traumatic damage and shrug off stab wounds. Death is the least of your worries. As you'll soon discover, you have more to fear from ideas and beliefs than some berk with a sword.

The character creation system in *Torment* is different from those of other computer roleplaying games. The game itself is the character generator. Your actions during the game define your character's development and can shape the world around you. You will find yourself gaining new skills, classes, and special abilities depending on your style of play. Although you still gain experience points and advance in level, gathering memories is just as important as gaining experience, talking to the dead can yield more than talking to the living, and your most dangerous enemies might be the only ones you can trust.

Torment allows you to recruit a variety of strange companions to join your quest, including puritan succubi, insane geometric shapes that talk to their weapons, foul-mouthed mimirs, and the walking dead. Some of the most vocal and unpredictable members of your parties might be your inventory items themselves … they can sing, speak, and even become jealous of other items.

Torment takes you through many fabulous locations aside from Sigil and the Outer Planes. You can also explore portions of the Outlands. Here are some of the new creatures one might encounter in the Outlands of *Torment*.

Chris is currently serving out several life sentences as a game designer on PLANESCAPE: Torment.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary or Herd (see below)
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Unknown (see below)
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1 or 2–12 (see below)
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	12 (Charge 18)
HIT DICE:	4+2
THAC0:	17
NO. ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2–12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Charge
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Half damage from blunt weapons, sound-based attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (6' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19–20)
XP VALUE:	270

Huge, squat beasts with powerful legs and a thundering croak, the gronk are also known as "hopping rocks" or "stone frogs." The ill-tempered beasts pose a threat to the nomadic bariaur tribes that roam the Outlands, and the bariaur tribes occasionally mount hunting parties solely to thin the gronk's numbers.

According to the bariaur nomads, gronk have existed on the Outlands for as far back as five bariaur generations. Their numbers have not increased substantially during that time, mostly due to bariaur thinning gronk herds with their rites of passage. A number of planewalkers have sighted the gronk on several Prime worlds as well.

Combat: The gronk aren't subtle creatures. When a creature comes within their line of sight, they emit thundering croaks and hop toward the target and smash it to death with their spiked headplates. The gronk can perform a hopping-charge up to 180 feet, striking for 2–16 points of damage.

All gronk are nearly deaf. They gain a +4 bonus to saving throws vs. any sound-based attack or spell. (If the saving throw fails, they suffer only half damage from the attack.) Bright visual displays irritate gronk. Several wizards are known to cast *dancing lights* or *pyrotechnics* spells into gronk herds to drive them into a frenzy. This results in the herd turning on itself until nearly every member is dead.

Habitat/Society: The gronk are so ill tempered they can't even tolerate their own species. Despite their herd mentality, the strength of the herd depends on the gronk's emotional cycle; members of a new herd can survive for almost a week before becoming irritated with one another. Soon after, their natural hatred gives way to furious bouts of head-smashing. The herd then dissolves and reforms into new herds several months later. As a result, the gronk can be encountered singly or in groups, depending on their "hate cycle."

Gronk herds have been found in deserts, plains, mountains, and swamps and in almost any climate. They shun any terrain near a large body of water, such as an ocean or lake.

Ecology: Ironically, the gronk's hatred of each other propagates their species. The gronk's reproductive organs are located near their brains, in the spiked carapace over their foreheads. The ridged spikes that cover the gronk's brainplate are actually "buds." When smashed together with sufficient force, the buds are transferred between carapaces, and a new bud grows on the headplate within a few days. This new ridge either falls off or is knocked off when the gronk smashes its forehead into another creature. If this ridge touches dirt, sand, earth, or rock, it submerges a few inches beneath the ground, only to burrow forth a few months later as a tiny gronk.

The gronk have never been seen to eat; it is a mystery how they sustain themselves. A gronk's lifespan ranges from three to five years. As gronk age, their brainplates crack and flake off until the creature suffers brain failure and dies.

Gronk headplates are often sought after as shields and armor plating. Gronk shields provide a –1 bonus to AC against all crushing attacks (in addition to the normal shield bonus), but they weigh over 50 pounds. Characters with less than a 15 Strength suffer a –1 penalty to all Dexterity checks and attack rolls when using the shields in combat.

Gronk headplates have also been used as a covering for siege towers and for shield walls. One bariaur myth claims gronk headplates were once placed upon an enchanted battering ram—this ram was said to act as a *horn of blasting* upon any structure, but it was so heavy it needed twice the number of men to carry it as a normal battering ram.

The gronk have bladderlike glands along their necks and upper backs. If skinned with care, a hunter can remove gronk glands intact. When treated with the right resins and filled with acid, the gland sacs can be used as grenades. These bladder bombs are extremely effective against fiends, and Blood War patrols occasionally capture herds of gronk, keeping them in pens in the Lower Planes to be harvested for their glands.

Grillig

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any angled terrain
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi (2–4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil

NO. APPEARING:	1 or 2–12
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	2+1
THAC0:	19
NO. ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–3/1–3/1–3/1–3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to edged weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4'–5' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19–20) or Unreliable (2–4)
XP VALUE:	175

Grilligs are small, scaled beasts with long arms and hunched legs. Their movement resembles a gorilla's, as the grillig uses its arms to propel itself along. All four of a grillig's limbs end in three talons, which are considered valuable spell components (see below). Grilligs are vicious pests and can be lethal if they encounter an expedition unprepared for them.

Legend has it that grilligs were born from two-dimensional angles; whatever their origin, they cannot be hurt by any edged weapon. Arrows, spears, swords, and other such weapons pass through a grillig harmlessly.

Grilligs can be found in almost any rugged, angular terrain. Chasms, caves, and mountainous areas have been known to run thick with them.

Combat: Grilligs prefer to weaken a target with ambushes and traps, then attack in groups until their prey is dead. In battle, they raise themselves on their forelimbs, then lash out with their foot talons, shredding the target with lightning speed.

Grilligs always gang up on victims. If all except one of the grilligs attacking a target is killed, the remaining Grillig will either immediately flee combat or join another group of Grilligs attacking another victim. If cornered before it can flee, the grillig hisses and gnashes its teeth, but it does not defend itself from attackers.

Habitat/Society: The bariaur call grilligs "pests that hunt their hunters." They have a pack mentality, and their society revolves around finding something larger and meaner than themselves, killing it, then moving onto a larger, meaner creature. If they can't find one, they will settle for lesser prey.

Usually, a grillig is encountered singly, scouting for a victim. If it finds one, it flees and gathers its pack, which then stalks the target. They soften their prey with ambushes or crude traps (pushing boulders off ledges, causing avalanches, stampeding other creatures over the victim, and so on). When it comes to these ambushes, grilligs display cunning equal to an average human. There is evidence to suggest that these creatures simply live to hunt, favoring it over their own survival.

Although grilligs send out lone scouts in search of victims, grilligs never attack or kill alone—there is always more than one present. Some sages speculate this may have something to do with a need to have superior numbers, but one yugoloth scholar scoffed at this, claiming it's because it "takes more than one point to make an angle."

Ecology: It is not known how grilligs breed—more seem to appear when their numbers become too thin. The bariaur root out these pests whenever they find them, but no matter how many they kill, more appear in the later seasons. If actively hunted, the grillig lie low for a while, then emerge when the hunters relax their guard.

Grilligs are the reason why bariaur tribes on the Outlands carry bludgeoning weapons. Local myths claim that grilligs can appear through sharp angles in buildings or terrain, but this has never been confirmed.

Mages are seeking ways to skin grilligs and use their hides as proof against angled attacks. The protection is thought to be in the grilligs' nature rather than in their physiology, for no one has succeeded in preserving a grillig's skin after death. When a grillig dies, its lizardlike skin becomes brittle, eventually turning to dust. If a way to preserve a grillig's hide was found, grilligs would become the most popular prey in the Planes.

A grillig's teeth and talons are often used as spell components when enchanting magical armor, and they have even been used as arrowheads and spearheads for magical weapons. It is said that there are rituals for giving certain weapons the "speed of a grillig," allowing the wielder of the weapon to attack multiple times in a round. Perhaps their most popular use is as a spell component for the *shield* spell; when a grillig's teeth or talon is added to the casting (add 1 segment to the casting time), the spell gives the caster an additional –1 bonus to AC vs. edged attacks. Some mages wear necklaces of grillig teeth for just such occasions.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Plains/Hinterlands
FREQUENCY:	Varies (see below)
ORGANIZATION:	Herd
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil

NO. APPEARING:	Varies
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	2+1
THAC0:	18
NO. ATTACKS:	1 bite/2 hooves/1 gore/1 spine
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–6/1–6/1–6/1–8/1–8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Spines, fear stampede
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M
MORALE:	Fearless (19–20)
XP VALUE:	270

Sohmien resemble huge horses with leathery, ashen hides and dead white eyes. They leave trails of mist in their wakes; the mist resembles that which shrouds the Hinterlands. The touch of their hooves kills vegetation and taints the land for years.

Their shoulder blades extend beyond their heads and necks, and three bone spikes (extensions of their spinal column) sprout from each shoulder.

These creatures are said to have been born from the fall of the last of the nightmare lords. According to legend, this nightmare lord was lured to the Gloom Meet by his subjects, then attacked by fiends who had tired of bartering for permission to use his nightmares. The nightmare lord was driven into the Hinterlands, his body riddled by cold iron spears and arrows. It is believed that where his blood struck the earth, sohmien sprang forth.

Sohmien hate nightmares and attack them over all other targets. It is said the ride of the sohmien will not end until they kill every nightmare in existence.

Combat: Sohmien prefer to attack with the spines that project from their shoulder blades. Three spines sprout from each shoulder; the top two primary spines can be fired at an opponent for 1–8 points of damage each. Their spines make a horrible whistling noise when fired and shriek when they taste blood. The spines are treated as +1 enchanted weapons, inflict double damage against nightmares, and regrow in 2d4 days.

After firing both primary spines, sohmien gore with their secondary spines. The sohmien prefer to aim for non-vital areas, allowing the creature to experience as much pain as possible before closing in for the kill.

The sohmien's secondary spines extend a foot past their heads, impaling a target for 1–8 points of damage. On a natural 20, the spines have gored the opponent so deeply that the Sohmien can also bite the target for 1–6 points of damage. They have been known to bite and trample a target with their hooves for 1–6 points of damage each, but this is rare.

The stampede of the sohmien inspires fear in any creature with fewer than 2 HD, forcing a Morale check. Nic'Epona, bariaur, and horses receive a +4 bonus to their Morale checks. The sohmien can only stampede at dusk and only at the request of someone who has invoked them (see below).

Habitat/Society: According to myth, sohmien are creatures of vengeance. They can be summoned by any vengeful mage or priest of sufficient power through a ritual called the *sohmien pact* (a spell believed lost long ago).

When summoned, sohmien must be ordered to ride, destroying all in the path leading to the creature that has wronged the summoner. The ride ends only when the sohmien are slain or when they have reduced the offending creature to near-death (1 hit point). At that point, the sohmien wait, pawing the ground. If their victim desires revenge for the attack, he can send the sohmien stampeding back to the summoner. What happens when the sohmien return is unknown, but chronicles state the summoner vanishes forever. Myths claim the summoner's voice joins the frightful wails that follow the sohmien as they ride from the Hinterlands.

No one has ever successfully used a sohmien as a mount.

Ecology: Sohmien do not eat, sleep, or mate; their rides are governed by some cycle that eludes scholars, for herds of them emerge from the Hinterlands randomly, then return. It is likely they appear only when a creature craves vengeance.

The spines of the sohmien are useful for harming, binding, or (in some circumstances) summoning nightmares. They can also be used to make *arrows of slaying nightmares* and for strengthening enchantments in weapons of vengeance. (Usually the spine is ground to powder and applied to the blade.)

A sohmien's spines turn to vapor within three days of being taken from the corpse.

Trelon

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any shadowy area
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Hive
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal
DIET:	Mages
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1–3/mage
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	3+1
THAC0:	17
NO. ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2–7/2–7
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	–3 penalty to opponents' surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to illusions, phatasms, and shadow magic
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	35%
SIZE:	L
MORALE:	Fearless (19–20)
XP VALUE:	420

Trelons originated on one of the Prime worlds and were brought to the Outlands by a sorcerer living on the ninth ring. This sorcerer used them as weapons, transporting them into the Academy of Weavers near Curst, where the trelons murdered the entire school of illusionists in their sleep.

Trelons have been described as a "mixture of orange and shadow." They have two long arms that end in curved spikes, two mandibles near the mouth for feeding, and two spindly legs. According to legend, trelons were created to exterminate mages on some long-dead Prime world. True or not, the trelons seem to hate mages and magic in general.

Trelons do not like natural light, and torches or strong lanterns can prevent a trelon from attacking its target. Light sorceries, however, drive them into frenzies, and they attack any opponent using them without hesitation.

Combat: A trelon swarm is terrible to behold. When they appear, they mob any nearby creature, tearing through their victims like scythes. Trelons attack with their two armspikes, bisecting a target like a pair of cutting shears. When they have killed a target, the mandibles around their mouth scoop up the remains of the victims. They do not stop to feed until they have killed every non-trelon in sight.

Trelons never "appear" at distances greater than 30 feet from their victim. Until a victim comes within range, the trelons simply don't exist. A target might never even know that he or she is in the middle of a swarm of trelons until they suddenly begin to materialize, imposing a –3 penalty to their prey's surprise roll. Where these creatures come from is unknown, but they seem to appear only in shadowy conditions where there is no natural light. It is not known where they retreat to once they have finished their attack.

No one knows how these creatures hunt. Some believe that the trelons track a creature by its spellcasting, its shadow, its emotions, or its sound. It is known that trelons have the ability to track a victim through almost any spell or magical item designed to cloak the victim. They are drawn to *invisibility, dust of disappearance, displacements,* and shadow magic. Trelons can sense a target no matter how well they are hidden. It has been observed (under extremely bloody circumstances) that magical cloaking effects seem to drive trelons into a rage, and they prefer to attack any invisible or cloaked target in range.

Trelons are immune to *hold monster, protection from evil,* illusions, shadow magic, and mind-influencing spells. They are the bane of illusionists, so much so that a trelon's claw is often a component used in the creation of arrows or other weapons designed to slay illusionists, shadows, or creatures from the Ethereal plane.

Habitat/Society: Trelons speak in soft clicks and chittering noises, which rise to a near-deafening screeching when they strike. Their insect nature makes several sages suspect that they may have a hive mentality, but like much that is known about trelons, it is only speculation.

Ecology: Trelons seem to combine the worst characteristics of demons and insects. They seem to favor cool, shadowy places. The scent of magic or a wizard causes them to swarm.

Trelons are valued for their talons, which are long enough to be used as a swordblades. When properly enchanted, they can become fearsome mage-slaying weapons. There have been tales that such weapons prefer to attack mages in combat, sometimes twisting in their owner's grip to stab at a magic-user, no matter the intended target. There are rumors that trelons eventually come to reclaim the piece of their kin taken from them.

Trelon blood is said to give *arrows of slaying* (notably those that slay mages, illusionists, and shadows) extra abilities, but these abilities are unknown. Any attempt to use trelon blood to boost spellcasting or in a magical ritual has caused the spell to fail and has, in some circumstances, summoned a swarm of trelons to the scene.

Convention Calendar

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines must be observed.

To ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing must include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held
2. Site and location
3. Address(es) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

Warning: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the first Monday of each month, four months prior to the on sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the first Monday of September. Announcements for all conventions must be mailed to: "Conventions," *Dragon® Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA, 98055, U.S.A.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at (425) 254-2262 (U.S.A.).

Important: *Dragon Magazine* does not publish phone numbers for conventions. Be certain that any address you send us is complete and correct.

To ensure that your convention listing makes it into our files, enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard with your first convention notice; we will return the card to show that it was received. You also might send a second notice one week after mailing the first. Mail your listing as early as possible, and always keep us informed of any changes. Please do not send convention notices by fax, as this method has not proven reliable.

❖ Australian convention
✳ Canadian convention
● European convention
💻 Online convention

August

DotCon

August 7–September 7 💻
Online Convention.
Website: www.bdominia.com
Email: talaysen@mailplanet.net

L.A.I.R.E

August 14–16 **NJ**
Camp Sacajawea, NJ.
Contact: Adam Krat, 8811 Bergenline Ave. Apt. #32, North Bergen, NJ 07047.

Bubonicon 31

August 20–22 **NM**
Howard Johnson East, Albuquerque, NM.
Contact: NMSF Conference, P.O. Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176.
Website: members.aol.com/bubonicon
Email: cwcraig@nmia.com

September

ShoreCon 99

September 9–12 **NJ**
Hilton Hotel, Cheery Hill, NJ.
Website: gameconvention.com/shorecon

QCA–CON

September 10–12 **IL**
Mark of the Quad Cities, Moline, IL.
Contact: The Dragon's Sanctum, 3213 23rd Ave., Moline, IL 61265.

Capitol Con XV

September 18–19 **IL**
Prairie Capitol Convention Center, Springfield, IL.
Contact: Capitol Con, 942 South First Street, Springfield, IL 62704.

CogCon 7

September 26–28 **NM**
University Center-East, Rolla, MO.
Contact: CogCon, P.O. Box 1939, Rolla, MO 65402.
Website: www.rollanet.org/~cogcon
Email: cogcon@rollanet.org

October

Archon 23

October 1–3 **IL**
Gateway Convention Center, Collinsville, IL.
Contact: Archon 23, P.O. Box 8387, St. Louis, MO 63132-8387.
Website: www.stlf.org/archon/23/
Email: archon@stlf.org

November

Pentacon 15

November 13–15 **IN**
Grand Wayne Convention Center, Fort Wayne, IN.
Contact: Pentacon, P.O. Box 10427, Fort Wayne, IN 46856.
Website: www2.fwi.com/~dht/pentacon
Email: dht@fwi.com

MIND BLAST Solution: Boccob's Blessed Book

Role Models

Mass Combat or the Next Best Thing

By Jim Bishop and J.D. Wiker

Photos by Craig Cudnohufsky

Although miniatures are invaluable for simplifying AD&D® game combat, when the number of combatants rises above forty or so, new problems emerge.

Mass combat with miniatures can be prohibitively expensive. Fifty orcs represent a significant financial commitment, especially when the orcs face fifty elves!

The second problem is complexity. The special maneuvers, called shots, individual initiative, and the other asptects of the AD&D game that make it so rich also make it unwieldy when resolving mass combat.

The third problem is elementary but still important. Fifty orcs take up virtually all the space on a battlemat and dominate a typical gaming table—leaving no room for the all-important tasty snacks and cool beverages!

While the *PLAYER'S OPTION®: Combat & Tactics* rules solve the complexity problem with an elegant mass combat system, they approach the space and cost issues by leaving the battlemat to the conflict between PCs and head villains, resolving the massed combat with paper and pencil. While this method has the advantage of being inexpensive and makes a certain cinematic sense, it can also make the larger conflict seem unimportant, even unreal—diminishing the dramatic impact of the PCs' involvement in a battle, war, or extended campaign.

Here are two solutions to the dilemma that don't short-change the mass-combat experience, but also don't involve building a 4' × 8' battlemat and buying enough lead to equip a Russian fishing fleet.

Representational Combat

The short-term solution to this problem is *representative mass combat*. In this solution, each miniature on the board represents 5, 10, 20, or even 100 actual combatants. Like the *Combat & Tactics* solution, this method has the advantages of being inexpensive and convenient. Also like the *Combat & Tactics* solution, it trades some of the advantages of using miniatures. Casualties must be tracked with pencil and paper—or with a die—a unit with one model standing takes up as much space on the battlefield as a unit with fifty; changes to unit leadership must be tracked with a pencil and paper. Some players might feel they are playing a cleverly disguised board game. Still, if mass combat is on the menu and extra minis aren't on the budget, this is an excellent solution.

Scars and War Wounds

Whether added to a PC figure to reflect past injuries or to villains to make them more fierce, scars and war wounds are easy ways to customize a model.

First, trace the path of the scar in pencil. This makes it possible to paint over and redraw it before committing to anything.

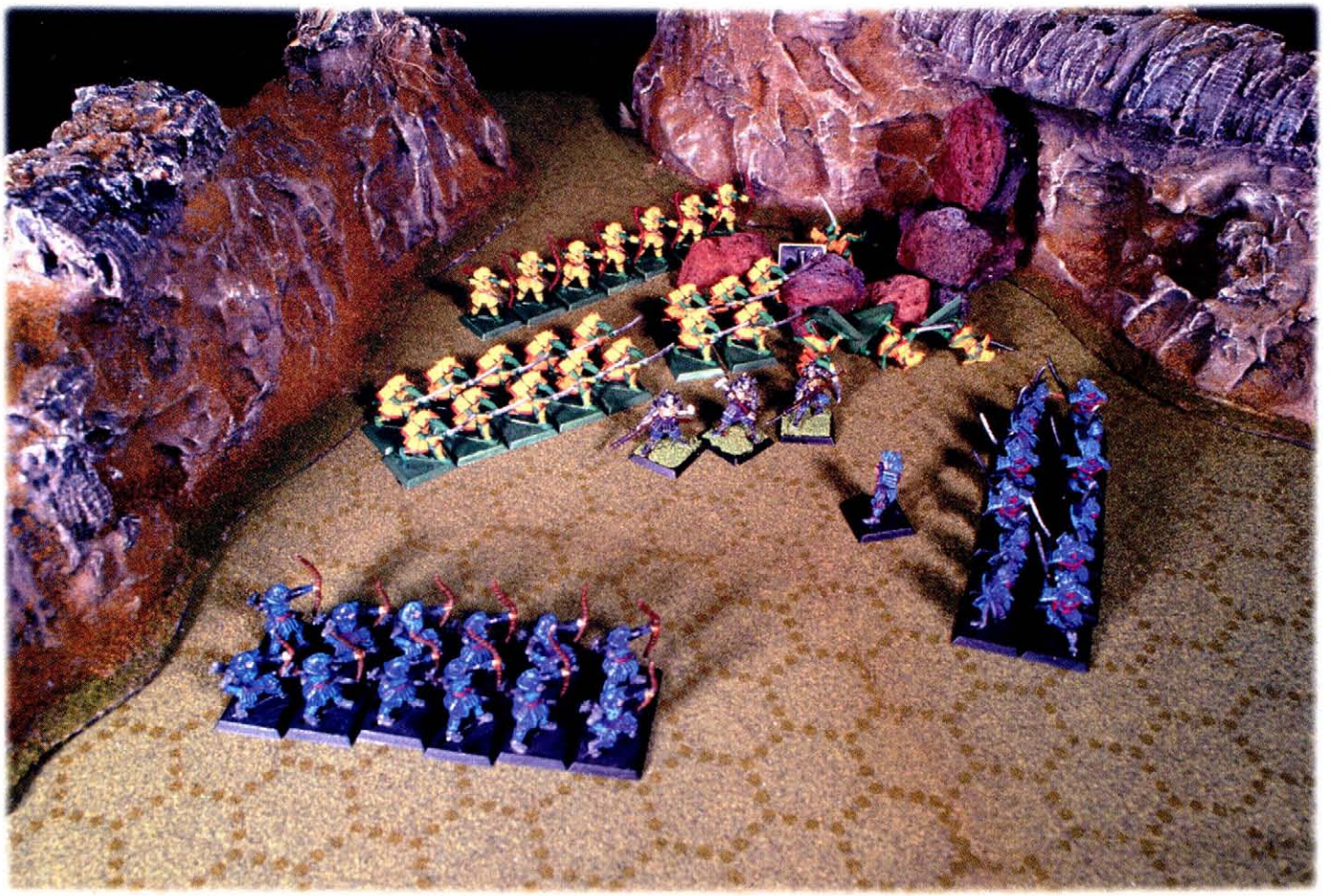
Next, follow the pencil line with a sharp hobby knife, being careful not to cut too deeply into the model, but leaving a clean, distinct line.

Using a fine-tipped brush, add a thin stripe of dark flesh or ochre to the inside of the cut.

Last, add a thinned brown/red wash (a mix of red and brown paint and water) with the same brush to the same area.

This method leaves a darkened, angry-looking scar that is particularly effective across a cheek or sword arm. To add an older or less-dramatic scar, use the same color inside the scar as on the rest of the model, and add a thinned flesh/brown wash.

After a shallow cut with a hobby knife, a fine line and a dark wash create a realistic scar.



In this combat scenario, the enemy troops aren't the only threat. Use the table below for an added element of danger.

Little Wars

Our long-term solution could be called "battles of the little people." This solution does away with the space problem while loading new costs onto the game group: Simply fight the battle in a smaller scale, typically 15mm or 6mm. This is an expensive but very satisfying choice for campaigns set in wartime or in which players are frequently part of larger battles. Both 6mm and 15mm mass combats accomplish the same result: They allow much larger conflicts to play out on an ordinary gaming table.

When playing the AD&D game, JD Wiker tries never to face an opponent over 25mm tall. Now that the avalanche mechanic is in print, Dungeon Master Jim's evil plans are complete.

A Rock and a Hard Place (Mass-Combat Scenario with Miniatures)

In this scenario, the PCs are part of a much larger force, perhaps the retinue of a minor noble. They must lead the troops through a narrow canyon against an army of evil creatures bent on invasion. Since the canyon is quite narrow—about thirty squares—the PCs are instrumental in holding the front line.

To complicate matters, the canyon lies in a tectonically unstable area that is made less stable by the violence of the battle. After every round of combat, roll 1d6. A roll of 1 indicates a geological event has occurred. Roll 1d4 to determine the type:

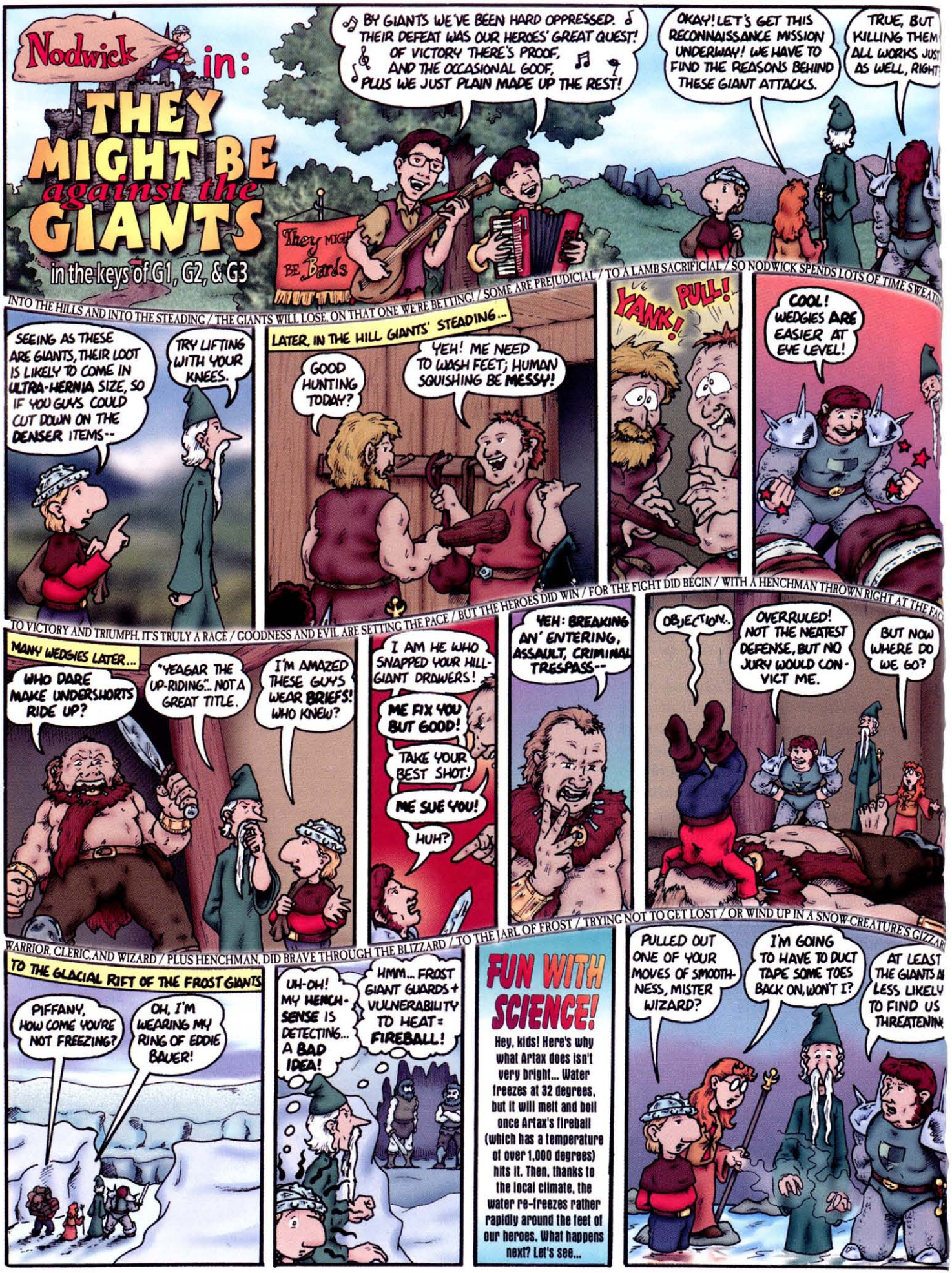
1. Earthquake. All combatants must roll under their nonmagical rear AC on 1d10 or be knocked down and unable to attack in the next round.

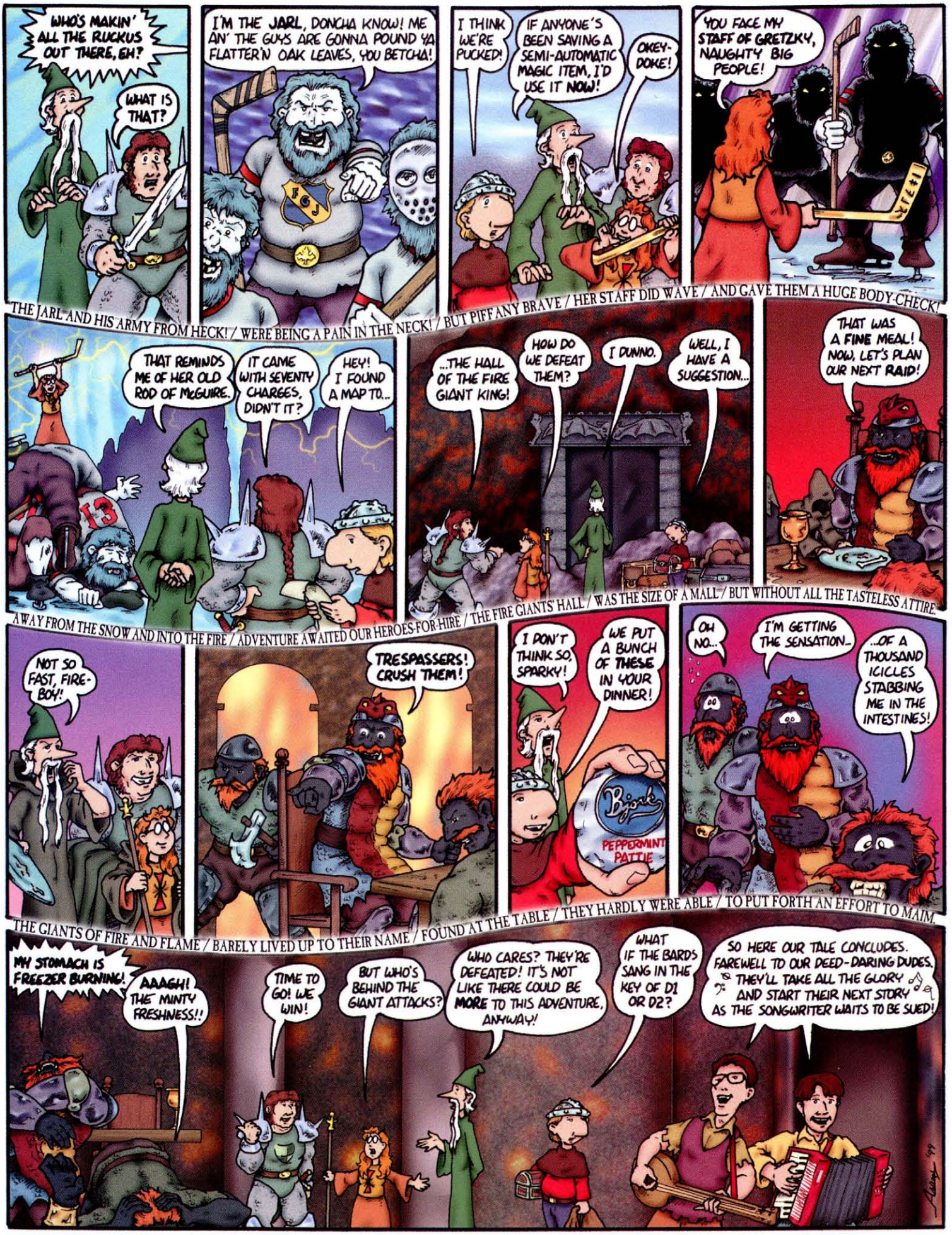
2. Crevasse. A crack in the earth opens, then closes on some unfortunate troops. Take two dice (foam novelty dice are easier on the figures), and drop them on the center of the combat from a height of at least 2 feet. Draw an imaginary line between the two dice to determine who is affected; troops must make a Dexterity check to avoid being trapped underground.

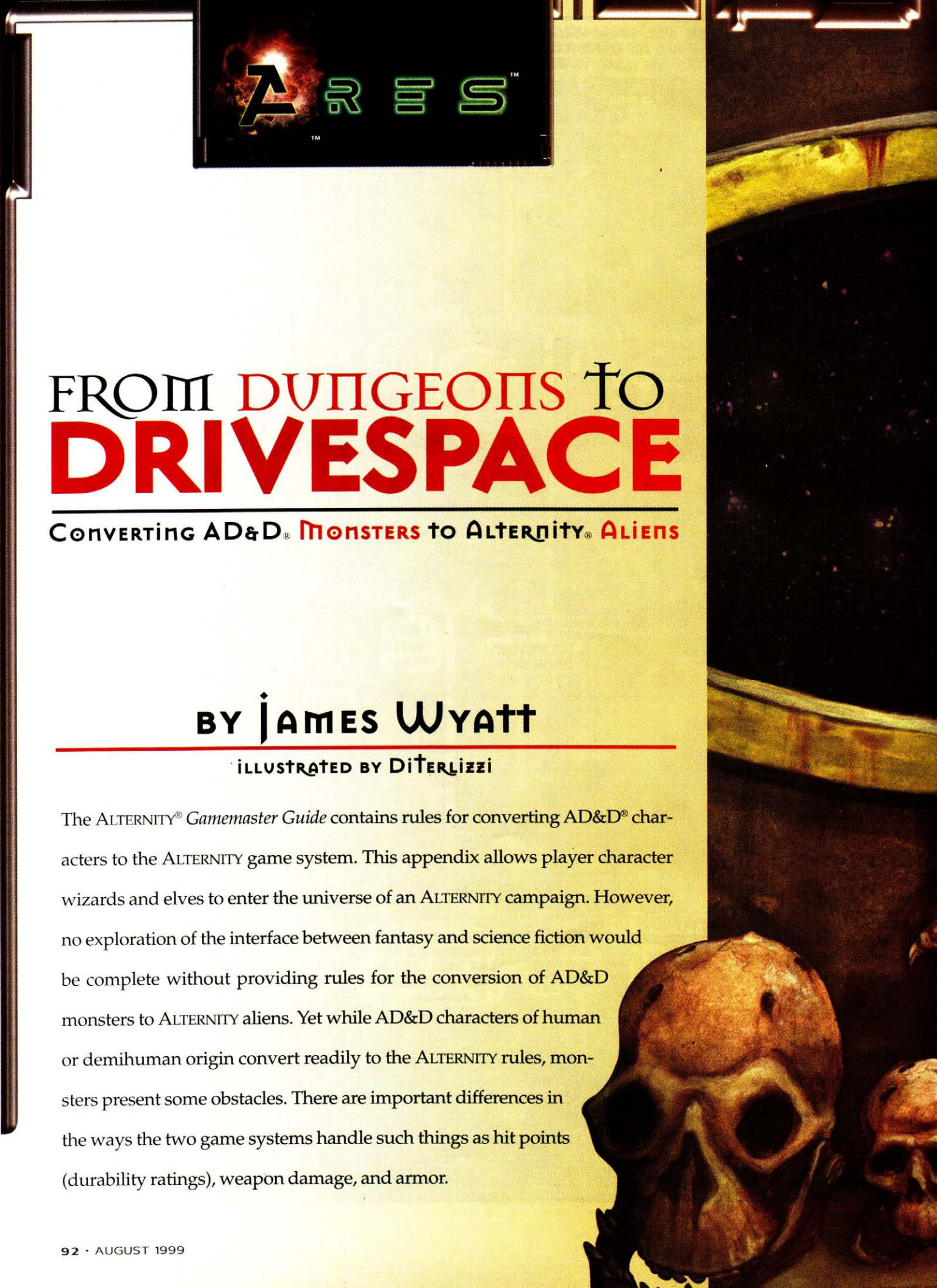
3. Landslide. The canyon walls crumble, narrowing the battle line by 1d6 squares on each side and forcing displaced combatants to move into the nearest open squares or fall prone for 1 round.

4. Avalanche. Roll 1d6 to determine the number of rocks dislodged from the top of the canyon. Choose that number of dice and drop them from a height of at least 2 feet. Any models knocked down must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or be crushed. The rocks remain where they fall, and may form new cover, obstacles, or high ground.

At the DM's discretion, use of destructive magic (*horn of blasting, fireball*, etc.) and weapons (bombards, catapults) could prompt a geologic event on a roll of 1–2 or even 1–3 on 1d6.


Nodwick in:
THEY MIGHT BE against the GIANTS
in the keys of G1, G2, & G3
♪ BY GIANTS WE'VE BEEN HARD OPPRESSED. ♪
THEIR DEFEAT WAS OUR HEROES' GREAT QUEST!
OF VICTORY THERE'S PROOF,
AND THE OCCASIONAL GOOF,
PLUS WE JUST PLAIN MADE UP THE REST!
They might be Bards
OKAY! LET'S GET THIS RECONNAISSANCE MISSION UNDERWAY! WE HAVE TO FIND THE REASONS BEHIND THESE GIANT ATTACKS.
TRUE, BUT KILLING THEM ALL WORKS JUST AS WELL, RIGHT?
INTO THE HILLS AND INTO THE STEADING / THE GIANTS WILL LOSE. ON THAT ONE WE'RE BETTING! / SOME ARE PREJUDICIAL / TO A LAMB SACRIFICIAL / SO NODWICK SPENDS LOTS OF TIME SWEATIN
SEEING AS THESE ARE GIANTS, THEIR LOOT IS LIKELY TO COME IN ULTRA-HERNIA SIZE, SO IF YOU GUYS COULD CUT DOWN ON THE DENSER ITEMS--
TRY LIFTING WITH YOUR KNEES.
LATER, IN THE HILL GIANTS' STEADING...
GOOD HUNTING TODAY?
YEH! ME NEED TO WASH FEET; HUMAN SQUISHING BE MESSY!
YANK!
PULL!
COOL! WEDGIES ARE EASIER AT EYE LEVEL!
TO VICTORY AND TRIUMPH. IT'S TRULY A RACE / GOODNESS AND EVIL ARE SETTING THE PACE / BUT THE HEROES DID WIN / FOR THE FIGHT DID BEGIN / WITH A HENCHMAN THROWN RIGHT AT THE FAC
MANY WEDGIES LATER...
WHO DARE MAKE UNDERSHORTS RIDE UP?
"YEAGAR THE UP-RIDING"... NOT A GREAT TITLE.
I'M AMAZED THESE GUYS WEAR BRIEFS! WHO KNEW?
I AM HE WHO SNAPPED YOUR HILL-GIANT DRAWERS!
ME FIX YOU BUT GOOD!
TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT!
ME SUE YOU!
HUH?
YEH: BREAKING AN' ENTERING, ASSAULT, CRIMINAL TRESPASS--
OBJECTION..
OVERRULED! NOT THE NEATEST DEFENSE, BUT NO JURY WOULD CONVICT ME.
BUT NOW WHERE DO WE GO?
WARRIOR, CLERIC, AND WIZARD / PLUS HENCHMAN, DID BRAVE THROUGH THE BLIZZARD / TO THE JARL OF FROST / TRYING NOT TO GET LOST / OR WIND UP IN A SNOW-CREATURE'S GIZZAR
TO THE GLACIAL RIFT OF THE FROST GIANTS
PIFFANY, HOW COME YOU'RE NOT FREEZING?
OH, I'M WEARING MY RING OF EDDIE BAUER!
UH-OH! MY HENCH-SENSE IS DETECTING... A BAD IDEA!
HMM... FROST GIANT GUARDS + VULNERABILITY TO HEAT = FIREBALL!
FUN WITH SCIENCE!
Hey, kids! Here's why what Artax does isn't very bright... Water freezes at 32 degrees, but it will melt and boil once Artax's fireball (which has a temperature of over 1,000 degrees) hits it. Then, thanks to the local climate, the water re-freezes rather rapidly around the feet of our heroes. What happens next? Let's see...
PULLED OUT ONE OF YOUR MOVES OF SMOOTHNESS, MISTER WIZARD?
I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DUCT TAPE SOME TOES BACK ON, WON'T I?
AT LEAST THE GIANTS AR LESS LIKELY TO FIND US THREATENIN


WHO'S MAKIN' ALL THE RUCKUS OUT THERE, EH?
WHAT IS THAT?
I'M THE JARL, DONCHA KNOW! ME AN' THE GUYS ARE GONNA POUND YA FLATTER'N OAK LEAVES, YOU BETCHA!
I THINK WE'RE PUCKED!
IF ANYONE'S BEEN SAVING A SEMI-AUTOMATIC MAGIC ITEM, I'D USE IT NOW!
OKEY-DOKE!
YOU FACE MY STAFF OF GRETZKY, NAUGHTY BIG PEOPLE!
THE JARL AND HIS ARMY FROM HECK! / WERE BEING A PAIN IN THE NECK! / BUT PIFFANY BRAVE / HER STAFF DID WAVE / AND GAVE THEM A HUGE BODY-CHECK!
THAT REMINDS ME OF HER OLD ROD OF McGUIRE.
IT CAME WITH SEVENTY CHARGES, DIDN'T IT?
HEY! I FOUND A MAP TO...
...THE HALL OF THE FIRE GIANT KING!
HOW DO WE DEFEAT THEM?
I DUNNO.
WELL, I HAVE A SUGGESTION...
THAT WAS A FINE MEAL! NOW, LET'S PLAN OUR NEXT RAID!
AWAY FROM THE SNOW AND INTO THE FIRE / ADVENTURE AWAITED OUR HEROES-FOR-HIRE / THE FIRE GIANTS' HALL / WAS THE SIZE OF A MALL / BUT WITHOUT ALL THE TASTELESS ATTIRE.
NOT SO FAST, FIRE-BOY!
TRESPASSERS! CRUSH THEM!
I DON'T THINK SO, SPARKY!
WE PUT A BUNCH OF THESE IN YOUR DINNER!
Bjorko
PEPPERMINT PATTIE
OH NO...
I'M GETTING THE SENSATION...
...OF A THOUSAND ICICLES STABBING ME IN THE INTESTINES!
THE GIANTS OF FIRE AND FLAME / BARELY LIVED UP TO THEIR NAME / FOUND AT THE TABLE / THEY HARDLY WERE ABLE / TO PUT FORTH AN EFFORT TO MAIM.
MY STOMACH IS FREEZER BURNING!
AAAGH! THE MINTY FRESHNESS!!
TIME TO GO! WE WIN!
BUT WHO'S BEHIND THE GIANT ATTACKS?
WHO CARES? THEY'RE DEFEATED! IT'S NOT LIKE THERE COULD BE MORE TO THIS ADVENTURE, ANYWAY!
WHAT IF THE BARDS SANG IN THE KEY OF D1 OR D2?
SO HERE OUR TALE CONCLUDES. FAREWELL TO OUR DEED-DARING DUDES. THEY'LL TAKE ALL THE GLORY AND START THEIR NEXT STORY AS THE SONGWRITER WAITS TO BE SUED!



FROM DUNGEONS TO DRIVESPACE

Converting AD&D® Monsters to Alternity® Aliens

BY JAMES WYATT

ILLUSTRATED BY DITERLIZZI

The ALTERNITY® *Gamemaster Guide* contains rules for converting AD&D® characters to the ALTERNITY game system. This appendix allows player character wizards and elves to enter the universe of an ALTERNITY campaign. However, no exploration of the interface between fantasy and science fiction would be complete without providing rules for the conversion of AD&D monsters to ALTERNITY aliens. Yet while AD&D characters of human or demihuman origin convert readily to the ALTERNITY rules, monsters present some obstacles. There are important differences in the ways the two game systems handle such things as hit points (durability ratings), weapon damage, and armor.

TABLE 1: STRENGTH CONVERSIONS

Size	T	S	M	L	H	G
Strength	5 (d4+3)	8 (2d4+3)	9 (2d4+4)	13 (2d4+8)	15 (2d4+10)	18 (2d4+13)

TABLE 2: BASE DEXTERITY CONVERSIONS

Size	T	S	M	L	H	G
Dexterity	14 (2d6+7)	11 (2d6+4)	9 (2d6+2)	8 (2d6+1)	5 (2d4)	3 (d4+1)

TABLE 3: DEXTERITY ADJUSTMENTS FOR MOVEMENT RATE

Move	6 or less	9	12	15	18	24+
Dex. adj.	–2	–1	0	+1	+2	+3

TABLE 4: CONSTITUTION CONVERSIONS

	Size					
Hit Dice	T	S	M	L	H	G
less than 1	2 (d4)	4 (d4+2)	6 (2d4+1)	—	—	—
1 to 3	4 (d4+2)	7 (2d4+2)	10 (2d4+5)	12 (2d4+7)	—	—
4 to 6	6 (2d4+1)	9 (2d4+4)	12 (2d4+7)	14 (2d4+9)	15 (2d4+10)	16 (2d4+11)
7 to 9	—	12 (2d4+7)	13 (2d4+8)	15 (2d4+10)	16 (2d4+11)	18 (2d4+13)
10 to 12	—	—	15 (2d4+10)	16 (2d4+11)	18 (2d4+13)	20 (2d4+15)
13 and up	—	—	16 (2d4+11)	18 (2d4+13)	20 (2d4+15)	24 (2d4+19)

ABILITY SCORES

The ALTERNITY game describes aliens—humanoid or otherwise—in the same format as heroes. Even the most exotic aliens have ratings for Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, etc.

STRENGTH

Strength serves much the same purpose in the ALTERNITY game as it does in the AD&D game, so the conversion is relatively straightforward. Use the size rating of the monster you are converting to determine its Strength score. See **Table 1.**

Naturally, if an AD&D monster's description specifies a Strength score, use that score to determine the creature's ALTERNITY Strength rating. For example, AD&D minotaurs (Large creatures) are said to have Strength scores of 18. Using the table in the ALTERNITY *Gamemaster Guide*, one sees that minotaurs in ALTERNITY have a Strength rating of 14.

DEXTERITY

Two elements of an AD&D monster's description determine its Dexterity score in the ALTERNITY game: its size and its movement rate. These two factors give a general indication of how quick and agile a monster is. Start by checking the monster's size against **Table 2.**

Once the creature's Dexterity score is determined, check its movement rate. Consult **Table 3** (using the best of the creature's movement rates) and adjust the result accordingly.

CONSTITUTION

Constitution in the ALTERNITY game not only reflects a character's stamina and endurance but also directly determines one's durability, the equivalent of AD&D hit points. Because of this, a monster's size and Hit Dice combine to determine its ALTERNITY Constitution rating. Consult the **Table 4.**

INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONALITY

Intelligence is the one ability score that is universally specified for AD&D monsters. A monster's Personality is directly tied to its Intelligence rating. See **Table 5** for base score conversions.

For a monster's Personality score, subtract one if the creature is solitary (as listed in the Organization entry for the monster). Also, subtract one if its morale rating is 2–7 (Unreliable or Unsteady), and add one if the morale rating is 15 (Champion) or higher.

WILL

An ALTERNITY character's Will measures his or her resolve and intutition, much like the AD&D Wisdom score. To determine a monster's Will score, check its Morale rating and consult **Table 6.**

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

DURABILITY

The ALTERNITY game's durability rating is rather different from AD&D hit points, for durability does not normally increase as heroes advance in level. While a 10th-level AD&D fighter might have over 60 hit points, modified by a high Constitution score, a 10th-level Combat Specialist in ALTERNITY probably still has the same 12 durability rating generated at character creation, derived directly from the Constitution score of 12. Similarly, while large and powerful monsters might have high durability ratings (for instance, the humpback whale detailed in the *Gamemaster Guide* has durability of 30/30/15/15), smaller monsters with high Hit Dice in AD&D might not have such high ratings. Normally, a monster's durability rating is calculated directly from its Constitution score, just as for characters: Its stun and wound ratings are equal to its Constitution, while its fatigue and mortal ratings are one-half its Constitution (rounded down).

TABLE 5: INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONALITY

AD&D Intelligence	Alternity Intelligence	Alternity Personality
Non- (0)	0	0
Animal (1)	1 (Animal 1–4 or d4+[0–2])	1 (Animal 1–4 or d4+[0–2])
	2 (Animal 5–9 or d4+[3–7])	2 (Animal 5–9 or d4+[3–7])
	3 (Animal 10–12 or d4+[8–10])	3 (Animal 10–12 or d4+[8–10])
Semi- (2–4)	4 (Animal 13–14 or d4+[11–12])	4 (Animal 13–14 or d4+[11–12])
Low (5–7)	5–6 (2d4+1)	5 (2d4)
Average (8–10)	7–8 (2d4+3)	8 (2d4+3)
Very (11–12)	9 (2d4+4)	9 (2d4+4)
High (13–14)	10 (2d4+5)	10 (2d4+5)
Exceptional (15–16)	11–12 (2d4+7)	11 (2d4+6)
Genius (17–18)	13–14 (2d4+9)	12 (2d4+7)
Supra-genius (19–20)	15–16 (2d4+11)	13 (2d4+8)
Godlike (21+)	17+ (2d4+12 or more)	14 (2d4+9)

For some monsters, you might wish to calculate the durability rating by using 1.5 times its Constitution score as a base (rounding the fraction down). In the *Gamemaster Guide*, this benefit is given to bears, buffalo, elephants, and whales (as well as to weren, a hero race)—all animals with better-than-average toughness. AD&D monsters that are similarly tough might deserve the same benefit.

Undead are a unique case for durability. They are immune to stun and fatigue damage, and mortal damage is treated as wound damage. Thus, undead have only wound ratings, and this rating should be 1.5 times the undead monster's Constitution score.

ACTION CHECK

A character's action check score helps determine initiative in the ALTERNITY game. For most monsters, derive this number by averaging the creature's Dexterity and Intelligence scores (rounding down) and add one. However, for monsters that gain a penalty or bonus to initiative (such as zombies), apply a similar bonus or penalty to the action check score. For zombies, which always attack last in a round in the AD&D rules, subtract two from their (already low) action check scores.

NUMBER OF ACTIONS

Use the creature's Constitution + Will to determine how many actions it can take in a round, according to Table P7 in the ALTERNITY *Player's Handbook*. If a monster possesses a standard claw/claw/bite routine, it should be allowed at least 3 actions in a round. Other monsters can use multiple attacks in a single phase, like a jellyfish's tentacles. For these monsters, the number of actions permitted in the ALTERNITY game is the number of phases they can act in. So a jellyfish capable of 6 attacks in a phase could attack with all six tentacles multiple times in a round if its ability scores allowed it.

MOVEMENT

Movement rates in the ALTERNITY game are expressed in meters per phase (about 3 seconds). Find the monster's AD&D movement rate on the following table to determine its ALTERNITY walk, run, and sprint rates. For creatures with flying or swimming movement rates, find the listed AD&D rate on **Table 7** and read the appropriate column.

TABLE 6: WILL CONVERSIONS

AD&D Morale	Alternity Will
Unreliable (2–4)	4 (d4+2)
Unsteady (5–7)	6 (d4+4)
Average (8–10)	8 (2d4+3)
Steady (11–12)	10 (2d4+5)
Elite (13–14)	12 (2d6+5)
Champion (15–16)	13 (2d6+6)
Fanatic (17–18)	14 (2d8+5)
Fearless (19–20)	15 (2d8+6)

TABLE 7: MOVEMENT CONVERSION

AD&D MV	Sprint or Fly	Run, Swim, or Glide	Walk or Easy Swim
3	8	6	2
6	12	8	2
9	14	10	4
12	18	12	4
15	22	14	4
18	24	16	6
21	28	18	6
24	30	20	8
36	36	24	12
48	48	32	16

For four-legged creatures, shift down one row for walking rate, shift down three rows for running rate, and double the sprint rate. For creatures (such as gorillas) that use their hands to help them walk, shift down one row for running rate and down two rows for sprinting rate.

For example, sahuagin in the AD&D game have a movement rate of 12, swim 24. Their land movement rate of 12 converts to ALTERNITY ratings of Sprint 18, Run 12, Walk 4. Their swimming movement rate of 24 converts to ALTERNITY ratings of Swim 20, Easy Swim 8.

ATTACKS

In most cases, a monster's natural attacks are derived from its Strength score. A claw/claw/bite routine for an AD&D monster like an ettercap translates into separate claw and bite attack forms, while the monster should be allowed at least 3 actions in a round to use these attacks. For the monster's attack

TABLE 8: DAMAGE CONVERSIONS

Damage Type (O/G/A)	Damage Ratings (O/G/A)
s/s/s	Xs/X+1s/X+3s
s/s/w	Xs/X+1s/X–1w
s/w/w	Xs/X–1w or X w*/X w or X+1 w*
w/w/w	Xw/X+2 w/X+3w
w/w/m	Xw/X+2 w/Xm

* For the Good rating, use X–1 for bludgeoning attacks, or X for light attacks. For the Amazing rating, use X for bludgeoning attacks, or X+1 for light edged attacks. For example, a bludgeoning attack that causes 1d6 damage on an Ordinary success would inflict 1d6–1 (or 1d4) on a Good success and 1d6 on an Amazing success.

TABLE 9: ARMOR RATING

AD&D AC	Alternity Armor Rating (Li/Hi/En)
10	none
9	d6–4/d4–3/d6–5
8	d6–3/d6–4/d4–3
7	d6–2/d4–2/d6–4
6/5	d6–1/d6–2/d4–2
4/3	d6/d4–1/d6–2
2	d6+1/d4/d4–1
1	2d4/d4/d4
0	2d4/d4+1/d4
–1	2d4+1/d4+1/d4+1
–2	2d4+1/d6+1/d4+1
–3/–4	3d4/2d4/d6+1
–5/–6	3d4/2d4+1/d6+1
–7	3d4/3d4/2d4
–8	3d4+1/3d4/2d4
–9	3d4+1/3d4/2d4+1
–10	3d4+1/3d4+1/2d4+1

ratings, use its Strength score as a base (for unarmed or melee attacks). If the creature's primary attack is a missile attack, use its Dexterity score instead. If the creature's primary attack is magical or psionic in nature, use the appropriate ability score—see Special Abilities, below.

This base number can be considered the monster's score in the appropriate broad skill—Unarmed Attack, Melee Weapon, or Ranged Weapon. Then calculate its specialty skill rank in the same way as for converted AD&D player characters: For every two points the creature's THAC0 is below 20, add one rank in the appropriate specialty skill. Taking the ettercap as an example, its medium size yields a Strength score of 9 for the creature, which then serves as its broad skill rating in Unarmed Attack. Because its THAC0 is 15 (five points below 20), it has two ranks in Unarmed Attack–*brawl*, yielding an attack rating of 11/5/2.

For creatures with multiple attack forms, like the ettercap in the example, it adds interest if the monster's attack ratings vary slightly for the different attack forms. Since the ettercap's bite is its most powerful attack, the attack rating for the bite could be one or two points higher than the claw attacks.

Monsters that are not carnivorous and use their natural weaponry only in defense or even unconsciously (a herd animal's trample, for example) are considered untrained in Unarmed Attack. Their attack ratings, then, are half of their Strength scores, rounded down.

The ALTERNITY game specifies damage for weapons and other attacks as three separate values: the result of an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing skill check. So, while a dagger in the AD&D game inflicts 1d4 points of damage against human-sized or smaller opponents, in the ALTERNITY game a dagger inflicts d4w (wound damage) on an Ordinary success, d4+1w on a Good success, and d4+2w on an Amazing success. There are two ways to calculate the damage scores for an AD&D monster in the ALTERNITY game. The first way is simply to find a weapon that is similar to the monster's attack form and use its damage rating. For example, you might decide that the ettercap's claws (1d3 damage in AD&D) are basically the same as daggers, but with a –1 penalty to damage. So their damage ratings in the ALTERNITY game would be d4–1w/d4w/d4+1w. Be sure to include any bonuses or penalties for the monster's Strength score in this figure.

The second, more complicated way, is to directly convert the AD&D damage scores to appropriate values for the ALTERNITY game. To do this, first determine the type of damage the attack inflicts. Bludgeoning attacks cause stun damage on Ordinary and usually on Good successes, and often on Amazing successes as well. Very small and light weapons like shuriken also do stun damage on Ordinary successes. These attack forms never inflict mortal damage. Pointed or edged attacks otherwise inflict wound damage on Ordinary and Good successes, and usually on Amazing successes as well. Only the heaviest low-tech melee weapons—such as heavy swords, spears, and polearms—or the attacks of a large alien monster inflict mortal damage on Amazing successes. So if a monster's natural attack is a tail slap or other bludgeoning attack, it inflicts stun damage, while a powerful bite or claw attack inflicts wound damage—even mortal damage on an Amazing success.

Next, use **Table 8** to determine the damage of the attack. The letter x in the chart represents the rough equivalent to the attack's AD&D damage rating. In general, the ALTERNITY game tends to use smaller ranges for damage—so a weapon that inflicts 1d6 points of damage in AD&D causes 1d4+1 in the ALTERNITY game—yielding the same average but a smaller range.

DEFENSES

Monsters converted to the ALTERNITY system receive appropriate resistance modifiers from their Strength and Dexterity scores when defending against melee and missile attacks, respectively.

A monster's thick hide or magical defenses can also serve as armor in the ALTERNITY rules. While armor ratings are complex and not necessarily consistent with AD&D armor class, the easiest way to determine a monster's armor rating is by finding its AC on **Table 9.**

SKILLS

The ALTERNITY game uses skills to define the most basic capabilities of a hero, alien, or even an animal. Special powers as well as abilities like climbing, jumping, swimming, or flying

are listed as skills. A monster may possess any of a huge range of skills in the ALTERNITY game, reflecting both innate abilities and learned talents.

STRENGTH SKILLS

Armor Operation: A monster that generally fights in heavy armor should know the *combat armor* specialty skill. If the converted monster has access to high technology, it might have the *powered armor* skill also.

Athletics: If the monster has any athletic ability at all, it should have this broad skill. If a monster has a Climb or Jump movement rate listed, it must have the Athletics broad skill as well as the appropriate specialty skills. Giants, noted for their ability to throw boulders, should have the *throw* specialty skill, as should any monster with a throwing attack.

Heavy Weapons: If you are creating an alien race that shares in advanced technology, its members may learn this skill and its associated specialty skills. At lower technology levels, this skill could conceivably cover the use of siege weaponry or ship-mounted weapons such as catapults (indirect fire) and ballistae (direct fire).

Melee Weapons: Any monster that uses weapons, from an orc to a yuan-ti, should have this broad skill and one or more appropriate specialty skills.

Unarmed Attack: As noted above, this broad skill is the basis for most monsters' natural attack forms. Any predator or monster that uses its attack forms intentionally and skillfully (as opposed to a reflexive defense or an incidental attack like a trample) should possess this broad skill. Many monsters have the *brawl* specialty skill, described above.

DEXTERITY SKILLS

Acrobatics: Any creature with a flying movement rate must have this broad skill, along with the flight specialty skill. Monsters that are particularly agile—such as great cats or monkeys—might also have the Acrobatics skill and possibly another specialty skill (such as *fall*).

Manipulation: Monsters with thieving abilities possess this broad skill and one or more of its specialty skills.

Ranged Weapons, Primitive and Modern: Intelligent monsters that use ranged weapons should have one of these broad skills. Also, monsters with a natural ranged attack form (such as the manticore's spiky tail) have this skill.

Stealth: Many AD&D monsters impose penalties to their opponents' surprise rolls; these should possess the Stealth broad skill at least and possibly one or more of of its specialty skills.

Vehicle Operation: Intelligent humanoid monsters may make use of vehicles appropriate to their technology level.

CONSTITUTION SKILLS

Movement: Any monster with an AD&D swimming movement rate automatically possesses the Movement–*swim* skill. Herd animals and other creatures that travel long distances on a regular basis (including nomads and migratory animals) should possess the Movement broad skill.

Stamina: This broad skill is free to every basic ALTERNITY hero race except the fraal, and it is common among animals, aliens, and monsters as well. Any monster should possess the broad skill unless the monster description paints it as particularly weak or frail. Particularly hardy creatures could have several ranks of the *endurance* specialty skill as well. Creatures with the special ability to fight even after reaching 0 hit points (such as brown bears) should have the *resist pain* specialty skill.

Survival: Intelligent monsters could well possess the Survival skill, which reflects their ability to live off the land. For natural animals, this ability is assumed and no skill is required.

INTELLIGENCE SKILLS

Creatures below Low intelligence in AD&D terms (5 Intelligence in the ALTERNITY game) have no Intelligence-based skills.

Low-intelligence monsters (ALTERNITY Intelligence 5 or 6) may learn basic Intelligence skills such as Knowledge–*deduce* or *first aid*, Tactics–*infantry tactics*, and Technical Science–*repair* (as listed in the STAR*DRIVE® *ALIEN COMPENDIUM*™ book).

Creatures above Low intelligence (ALTERNITY Intelligence 7 and above) may learn all other Intelligence skills if appropriate for their society and technological level.

WILL SKILLS

Administration: Monsters with a strong lawful bent and high intelligence might learn this broad skill and its associated specialties. Administration–*bureaucracy* might be essential in dealing with modrons, for example.

Animal Handling: In a world where mounts are more common than vehicles, this skill replaces Vehicle Operation as a free broad skill for humans. It should be fairly common for any race that rides mounts or uses trained animals as guards.

Awareness: This is a common skill, free to every standard alien race and common to all normal animals as well. Unless there's a very good reason for it, any monster converted from AD&D should have the Awareness broad skill and, usually, the *intuition* specialty skill as well. The Perception skill is a good choice for monsters with unusually acute senses.

Creativity: A luxury of intelligent species, the Creativity skill

TABLE 10: MAGIC RESISTANCE

AD&D Magic Resistance	ALTERNITY Resistance Modifier
76–100%	+4
51–75%	+3
26–50%	+2
1–25%	+1

could be assigned to any monster described as having an artistic bent. For example, the AD&D *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ book says, "Locathan coral carvings and jewelry are highly valued by art collectors...." While not all locathah have a Creativity-related skill, some do.

Investigate: Creatures like dogs, with innate tracking ability, should possess the Investigate–*track* specialty skill. Intelligent animals, and certainly many monsters, can possess other specialty skills or just the broad skill.

Resolve: Resolve–*physical resolve* is a common characteristic of most animals with ALTERNITY Intelligence scores between 2 and 4. More intelligent monsters might have the broad skill or either of its specialty skills if the monster source describes it as possessing particular fortitude, either of mind or body.

Street Smart: Monsters like meazels, kenku, and other creatures accustomed to life on the fringe of human society should possess this broad skill. Specific individuals with particular ties to criminal organizations or knowledge of illegal practices might possess either specialty skill as well.

Teach: Civilized and intelligent monsters could possess this broad skill on an individual basis.

PERSONALITY SKILLS

Culture: Monsters that live within an organized society—either their own or another race's—might possess Culture–*etiquette* or other related skills. Lycanthropes, dopplegangers, and vampires are examples of monsters that often have call for such skills, while social humanoids like goblins and orcs might be well versed in their own cultures' unique forms of etiquette.

Deception: Any intelligent and reasonably social monster might know the skills of Deception.

Entertainment: Monsters like wolfweres should have Entertainment–*musical instrument* and *sing*. Other monsters with bardlike abilities might possess other specialty skills as well.

Interaction: Every standard alien race except the mechalus receives Interaction as a free broad skill. It should likewise be common among intelligent, social monsters such as orcs, genies, and sahuagin. While minotaurs are not particularly social, they certainly possess the Interaction–*intimidate* specialty skill. Nymphs and dryads might have the *charm* skill, while succubi naturally possess *seduce*. Dragons often have the *bargain* and *intimidate* skills.

Leadership: Only a race like flinds or lizard kings, which are practically born leaders, possess Leadership or its specialty skills. Individuals of any intelligent, social race might have these skills.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Psionics: Psionics are fairly easy to convert from AD&D to the ALTERNITY game. AD&D psionic powers fall into five disciplines: Clairsentience, Psychokinesis, Psychometabolism, Psychoportation, and Telepathy. Psychokinesis directly translates to the ALTERNITY game's Telekinesis broad skill, Psychometabolism to Biokinesis, Clairsentience to ESP, and Telepathy to Telepathy. Psionic AD&D characters or monsters with access to one of these four disciplines automatically have access to the corresponding ALTERNITY broad skill. You can consider Teleportation (equivalent to AD&D's Psychoportation) a new broad skill in the ALTERNITY game, based on Will and costing 6 skill points, and then create specialty skills to parallel specific AD&D powers. Alternatively, you can assign psychoportive powers to another broad skill, such as Telekinesis.

The example below uses illithids (mind flayers) to illustrate the process of creating new ALTERNITY psionic powers based on AD&D powers. Since illithids possess only a limited number of pscyhoportive powers in the AD&D game, and two out of three deal with the Astral Plane, which has little relevance in a science-fiction setting, the remaining skill (teleport) is included under the Telekinesis broad skill.

MAGIC

Monsters with spellcasting ability (as opposed to innate spell-like abilities) should be treated exactly like wizards or clerics, using the guidelines in the appendix of the ALTERNITY *Gamemaster Guide*. They have access to either the Arcane Magic FX or Faith FX broad skills, and you should define their spellcasting ability within that framework, as you decide is appropriate for your campaign.

You can define innate spell-like abilities either as magical FX or as Super Power FX. Since these spell-like powers do not require arcane rituals, spoken words, or components, they are actually more like Super Power/Extreme Ability FX than Arcane Magic. See the example of beholders, below, for an illustration of converting special abilities to FX. Note that the cost of the FX skill is irrelevant—since these are innate abilities, every member of the species possesses the skill even if it can't pay the skill point cost.

MAGIC RESISTANCE

Monsters with magic resistance in AD&D gain an additional resistance modifier in ALTERNITY which reduces the chance of magical FX affecting them. The amount of this resistance modifier is based on the percentage of magic resistance the AD&D monster possesses, as shown on **Table 10.**

THE ILLITHIDS

TSR's 1980 adventure *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* featured an illustration of a mind flayer in a futuristic uniform, holding an advanced weapon while mind blasting a hapless adventurer. Nine years later, a mind flayer graced the cover of the SPELLJAMMER® boxed set, and illithids in space were a fearsome reality in the AD&D game universe. Perhaps no AD&D monster is more like a science-fiction alien—utterly unlike the humans whose brains they eat, originating on a different world, and relying more on psionics than magic.

Description: Illithids are humanoid aliens distinguished by the four tentacles that frame their suckerlike mouths. Their

skin is a hideous mauve color and glistens with thick mucous. Their hands have four fingers, and their feet are webbed, allowing them to swim as fast as they can walk. Their eyes are dead white, and their craniums bulge in an octopoid shape. They dress in flowing robes and cover their bodies completely—including their heads—when dealing with humans.

Encounter: Illithids are deadly foes in combat, even though they shun high-tech weaponry and defenses. Their primary form of attack is their psionic *mind blast*, which they use to stun opponents. When faced with a number of enemies, an illithid uses its *mind blast* to stun as many as possible, then grabs one or two stunned victims and attempts to escape with them. It keeps some victims as slaves and feasts on the brains of others.

When attacking a single, unarmed victim, an illithid often chooses instead to attack with its tentacles. It can use all four tentacles against one opponent in a single phase. A successful hit indicates that all four tentacles have attached to the victim's skull. Note, however, that if a character is wearing any sort of protective headgear, the mind flayer's tentacle attack automatically fails, or is at least made at a significant penalty. (A CF softwuit hood or any sort of armor that encases the entire body constitutes protective headgear, but a baseball cap would not.) While attached, a tentacle causes no additional damage, and the victim can break its grip with a successful Strength feat check. The tentacles secrete a powerful flesh- and bone-dissolving enzyme that allows them to burrow into the skull of the victim to extract its brain. Once all four tentacles have attached themselves to the victim, they find their way in to the victim's brain and kill him immediately in the following action round.

Habitat/Society: Illithids are highly intelligent beings with well-developed psionic powers. They communicate exclusively via telepathy, though they often punctuate their thoughts with waving tentacles. Their goals as a species include the complete domination of the known galaxy and the subjugation of all other species to their will. They view other races as fodder and slave labor.

For all their monstrous evil, illithids are an advanced and civilized race. They dole out bits of their technology to their assimilated subjects while jealously guarding any secrets that would make their slaves less manageable. They also practice extensive genetic manipulation of their subjects, breeding ideal slave societies over generations.

Illithids dwell on dark worlds or in deep subterranean caverns, avoiding the light of any star. They keep large numbers of slaves in thrall by psionically sapping their willpower. Their society is governed by an elder-brain, a sentient, psionic pool that contains the brains of those mind flayers that have gone before.

See the AD&D *Monstrous Manual* and the *Monstrous Arcana*™ sourcebook *The Illithiad* for more information about illithid society and culture.

In the AD&D Spelljammer® campaign setting, illithids are active traders and a powerful force among the multi-racial community of space. In an Alternity campaign, illithids could easily play a similar role in a universe populated with a large number of alien species.

Alternatively, illithids could be the dominant race of the campaign. They could be at the head of a star-spanning empire, with hundreds of worlds and races enslaved by their evil minds. In a contemporary or near-future campaign, the first agents of this illithid empire could have just arrived at Earth. In a far-future campaign, the heroes could be freedom fighters among the illithids' slaves.

As described in *The Illithiad*, illithids in the AD&D game have created a wide variety of technological devices powered by psionic energy. In the Alternity game, these biomechanical devices would fit perfectly as advanced technology, and illithids could possess a special form of cybertech that relies on psionic energy and illithid mucous to function. Illthids might have invented AI computers with a vial of fluid from an elder brain as the core of the CPU, and NIJacks would certainly rely on the psionic attunement of illithid mucous.

Illithid Game Data

STR	9	(2d4+4)	INT	14	(2d4+9)
DEX	9	(2d6+2)	WIL	13	(2d6+6)
CON	13	(2d4+8)	PER	13	(2d4+8)

Durability 13/13/6/6 — Action check: 13+/12/6/3
Move: Sprint 18, run 12, walk 4, easy swim 4, swim 12 — Actions: 3
Reaction score: Ordinary/3 — Last Resorts: 0
Psionic energy points: 13

Attacks

Tentacles (×4)	13/6/3	d4–2w/d4w/d4–2m	LI/O
Mind blast	18/9/4	d4+2s/d6+2s/d8+2s	psionic attack

Defenses

no resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
no resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
+4 resistance modifier vs. magical FX
Armor: d6–1 (LI), d6–2 (HI), d6–1 (En)

Skills

Athletics [9]; Unarmed Attack [9]–*brawl* [13]; Movement [13]–*swim* [14]; Stamina [13]; Knowledge [14]–*deduce* [15]; Life Science [14]–*genetics* [15]; Awareness [13]–*intuition* [14]; Resolve [13]; Deception [13]; Interaction [13]–*bargain* [14], *intimidate* [15]; ESP [14]–*mind reading* [16]; Telekinesis [13]–*levitation* [15]; Telepathy [13]–*contact* [15], *datalink* [14], *mind blast* [18], *mind shield* [15], *suggest* [15].

The Beholders

Along with illithids, beholders are among the most "alien" of AD&D monsters and, like the mind flayers, are well suited to a science fiction (or science fantasy) campaign.

Description: Beholders are completely alien creatures, appearing as large spheres about 1 to 1.5 meters in diameter. The beholder's body is dominated by a large central eye and a toothy mouth, and the body is crowned with ten smaller eyes attached to flexible eyestalks. Their hide is covered with plates similar to hard gray plastic. They move by a form of levitation, thanks to a lighter-than-air gas that collects in pockets within their cartilaginous skulls. Their natural ability to levitate makes them comfortable in zero-gravity conditions.

Continued on page 102 ▼

ILLITHID PSIONIC SKILLS

Illithids are the true masters of psionic power, possessing a range of skills and abilities that surpasses that of any other Mindwalkers in the universe. Alhough they do not generally learn Biokinesis and its specialty skills, they are adept at the other branches of psionic power and have developed a wide variety of speciality skills beyond those listed in the ALTERNITY® *Player's Handbook*. These skills, all adapted from the descriptions in *The Illithiad*, are described below. They are, by no means, the only skills illithids might possess, so Gamemasters should feel free to devise new ones regularly.

INTELLIGENCE SKILLS

Skill Name	Cost
ESP	5
Mind reading	3

WILL SKILLS

Skill Name	Cost
Telekinesis	6
Control body*	3
Levitation	2
Pyrokinetics*	4
Teleport*	4

PERSONALITY SKILLS

Skill Name	Cost
Telepathy	5
Awe	2
Contact	3
Datalink*	4
Domination*	4
Intrusive taste link*	2
Microcosm*	3
Mind blast*	4
Mind shield	2
Suggest	3

Skills marked with an asterisk (*) cannot be used untrained.

WILL SKILLS

CONTROL BODY

Psionic specialty, cost 3
Extended duration

With this power, an illithid can psionically manipulate the body of another creature as if the victim were a marionette. The illithid makes a skill check (counting the victim's Will resistance modifier and any addition to that modifier based on the target's Resolve—*mental resolve* skill), but success at this check does not guarantee the success of the power. Victims can use their Resolve—*physical resolve* skills in an attempt to wrest control of their bodies back from the illithid. Victims can continue trying to regain control each action round. Each skill check is made with a penalty based on the success of the illithid's *control body* skill roll: Ordinary, +1 step penalty; Good, +2 step penalty; Amazing, +3 step penalty.

If the *control body* power is successful, the illithid gains basic control over the victim's legs and arms, causing them to move in an awkward, jerky fashion. The illithid can force the victim to attack, though these attacks are made with a +3 step penalty. The illithid gains no control over the rest of the victim's body besides the limbs. The victim can still speak freely and is completely aware of his or her surroundings.

The illithid must remain within 80 yards of the victim to maintain control.

TELEPORT

Psionic Specialty, cost 4

This power allows an illithid to instantly transport itself and its clothing and equipment from one location to another. The illithid must be able to picture the destination with reasonable accuracy, assuming a certain amount of familiarity with the location. Modifiers to the skill check apply based on the distance traveled and the amount of gear the illithid carries (above its own body mass, of course).

Distance	Modifier
10 meters	–1
100 meters	0
1000 meters	+1
10 kilometers	+2
100 kilometers	+3
1000 kilometers	+4
10,000 kilometers	+5
interplanetary	+9

Mass carried	Modifier
≥ 20% illithid's mass	0
≥ illithid's mass	+2
≥ 300% illithid's mass	+4

PERSONALITY SKILLS

AWE

Psionic Specialty, cost 2
Extended duration.

Victims affected by this power regard the illithid user with a mixture of fear and respect. The illithid seems dangerously powerful, and the affected creatures avoid the illithid if possible. They seek out the first opportunity to escape the illithid's presence and do not attack it unless they are forced to.

DOMINATION

Psionic Specialty, cost 4
Extended duration.

An illithid can use this psionic power to bend others to its will, implanting mental commands into its victim's mind. If the illithid's skill check is successful (counting the victim's Will resistance modifier), it can control a single victim's actions for as long as the illithid has psionic energy points to expend in maintaining the power.

INTRUSIVE TASTE LINK

Psionic Specialty, cost 2
Extended duration.

A perfect reflection of the illithids' twisted world view, this power creates a sensory link between the illithid and one or more target creatures. The illithid may link to one creature per phase, at a cost of 2 psionic energy points each. Once linked, whatever the illithid tastes, the linked creatures taste as well. Illithids practice a social entertainment called "performance eating," and this power is most often used by practitioners of this art to enhance the experience of the onlookers. However, other illithids use it as a form of torture: While eating the brain of one human, they force the victim's companions or even the victim himself to share the taste.

MICROCOSM

Psionic Specialty, cost 3
Extended duration.

This power plunges the victim into a pleasant fantasy world of his own imagining. Sensory input from the real world is completely shut off—the victim experiences only what he or she desires, the sensations of an idyllic but illusory world. The victim believes that he or she has actually been transported to this dreamscape, unless something causes the individual to believe that what he or she is experiencing is false. In this case, the victim can attempt one Resolve—*mental resolve* skill check to break free from the sensory prison.

While in the microcosm, the victim cannot be roused by external stimuli, since no sensory information (shouting, slapping, smelling salts) can penetrate the walls of the psionic power. The victim stands catatonic while under the power's influence. This reverie lasts as long as the illithid pays the cost in psionic energy points.

BEHOLDER FX

Treat the spell-like abilities of a beholder's eleven eyes as Super Power FX, as described below.

ANTI-MAGIC RAY (GREAT EYE)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: INT; Amazing quality, base cost 15

When a beholder activates this ray, no magic functions within its effect. This includes Arcane Magic and Faith FX, as well as any Super Power FX that the GM rules are magical in nature. The FX of a beholder's other eyes are affected by the Anti-Magic Ray. The ray is 125 meters long and extends in a 90° cone from the front of the beholder.

CHARM PERSON (EYE 1)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: PER; Good quality, base cost 8

This ray allows the beholder to bring one human or humanoid alien under its influence. The charmed person treats the beholder as a trusted ally, though he does not obey the beholder's orders unquestioningly. The range of the ray is 100 meters. The victim's Will resistance modifer applies to the skill roll.

CHARM MONSTER (EYE 2)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: PER; Good quality, base cost 8

Similar to the Charm Person ability, this ray works on a single nonhumanoid alien creature. The range of the ray is 50 meters. The victim's Will resistance modifer applies to the skill roll.

SLEEP (EYE 3)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: WIL; Good quality, base cost 8

This ray, with a range of 25 meters, puts a single target of level 4 or less (or an alien with a Con of 8 or less) into a deep sleep. The victim's Will resistance modifer applies to the skill roll.

TELEKINESIS (EYE 4)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: WIL; Amazing quality, base cost 12

Similar to the psionic specialty of *psychokinetics*, this ray (range 80 meters) allows the beholder to move and manipulate objects weighing up to 110 kg. The beholder can manipulate only one object at a time but can move it with pinpoint precision.

FLESH TO STONE (EYE 5)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: WIL; Amazing quality, base cost 14

Using this ray, a beholder can transform a living (or dead) creature of flesh (Series I life) into stone. The victim's Constitution resistance modifer applies to the skill roll. Beholders use this power not only in self-defense but also as an art form. They can reverse the effect of the ray at will. The ray's range is 25 meters.

DISINTEGRATE (EYE 6)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: DEX; Amazing quality, base cost 15

This ray completely obliterates matter within its 15-meter range. The beholder can instantly destroy a single creature with the ray (the victim's Dexterity resistance modifier applies to the skill roll in this case) or obliterate a 3-meter cube of unliving matter.

BEHOLDER GAME DATA

STR	9	(2d4+4)	INT	12	(2d4+7)
DEX	7	(2d6)	WIL	14	(2d8+5)
CON	15	(2d4+10)	PER	11	(2d4+4)

Durability 15/15/7/7 — Action check: 11+/10/5/2
Move: Fly 8, glide 6 — # Actions: 3
Reaction score: Marginal/3 — Last Resorts: 0
FX Energy: 20

ATTACKS

Bite	15/7/3	2d4w/2d4+2w/2d4m	LI/O

Ray FX—see below

DEFENSES

No resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
No resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
Anti-magic ray dissipates magical FX
Armor: *body:* d6+3 (LI), d4+2 (HI), d6 (En)
eyes: d6–2 (LI), d4–2 (HI), d6–4 (En)
eyestalks: d6+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4–1 (En)

SKILLS

Unarmed Attack [9]–*brawl* [15]; Acrobatics [7]–*flight* [10], *zero-g training* [9]; Stamina [15]; Knowledge [12]–*deduce* [14]; System Operation [12]; Technical Science [12]; Awareness [14]–*intuition* [15], *perception* [17]; Creativity [14]–*architecture* [15] or sculpture [15]; Investigate [14]–*interrogate* [16]; Resolve [14]–*physical* [16], mental [15]; Deception [11]; Interaction [11]–*intimidate* [13]; Super Power FX (see separate sidebar).

FEAR (EYE 7)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: PER; Good quality, base cost 10

Creatures touched by this ray instantly turn and sprint away from the beholder for 6 action rounds. The victim's Will resistance modifier applies to the skill roll. The range is 15 meters.

SLOW (EYE 8)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: WIL; Good quality, base cost 8

This ray imposes a +3 step penalty to the affected creature's action check roll and reduces the victim's maximum number of actions by half. The victim can only move at half normal speed and suffers a +2 step penalty to all skill rolls. Opponents targeting the affected creature in melee or ranged combat gain a –2 step bonus. The victim's Will resistance modifier applies to the skill roll. The range is 120 meters.

CAUSE WOUNDS (EYE 9)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: DEX; Good quality, base cost 10

This deadly ray inflicts 2d4w/2d4+1w/2d6w points of damage to its target. The victim's Dexterity resistance modifer applies to the skill roll. The ray's range is 45 meters.

DEATH RAY (EYE 10)

Super Power, Extreme Ability: DEX; Amazing quality, base cost 15

With a range of 30 meters, this ray instantly snuffs out the life force of its target. The victim's Dexterity resistance modifier applies to the skill roll.

Continued from page 99 ▼

Encounter: A beholder's body consists of four key regions: the body, the central eye, the eyestalks, and the ten small eyes atop the eyestalks. Each region has different levels of protection (reflected in the different armor ratings listed in the sidebar), and each also holds a certain amount of the beholder's durability. When a character attacks a beholder without specific intent to hit any particular part of the creature's body, roll a d20 on the following table to determine where the blow lands.

Damage inflicted to the eyestalks and their attached eyes (each of which has 4 stun points and 4 wound points) does not affect the beholder as a whole. The beholder can easily survive the loss of all its eyestalks and regenerates one lost eyestalk per week. Mortal damage inflicted to the eyestalks is treated as wound damage and does not threaten the life of the beholder at all. Of course, if the beholder is killed, the eyestalks are killed as well.

Naturally, characters can make called shots to hit a specific part of the beholder's body, suffering a +4 step penalty to their skill check. Note that a successful called shot in this case does not inflict more damage (like the "Dead-Eye Shot" described in the ALTERNITY *Gamemaster Guide*).

Each of the beholder's eyes possesses a special magical power, described in the sidebar as Super Power FX. If attackers are within a 90° arc of each other around the beholder, the creature can bring d4 of its smaller eyes to bear on them. If targets are in a 180° arc, it can use d6 eyes, d8 if they are in a 270° arc, and all ten if it is attacked from all sides. The beholder can only use its central eye's ray against attackers in front of it. In zero-g situations, beholders tend to float so that attackers are "above" them, allowing them to bring all 10 small eyes to bear.

Habitat/Society: Beholders are loathsome and hateful, attacking species they consider inferior (all other species) without provocation. Their greatest hatred, however, is reserved for other beholders who do not live up to their standards of physical perfection. (Every beholder considers itself and its brood, who all appear identical, to be the embodiment of physical perfection.) The slightest variation in appearance—a different color plating or eye, a miniscule difference in the size of the central eye—is cause for extermination. The resultant warring among different beholder hives may be the one factor that prevents them from overrunning the universe.

Beholders live in hives on starships or in planet-bound cavern complexes. The beholder "hive mothers" lead these communities and can control ordinary beholders. See the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* book and the *MONSTROUS ARCANA* sourcebook *I, Tyrant* for more information about beholder society and culture.Beholders, despite relying on telekinesis for fine manipulation, are masters of ship construction and other technicaltasks. They are more advanced in their development of mechanical devices (including starships) than computers and the like. They shun cybertech as a corruption of the pure natural form of the beholder, but some rogue beholders have been known to carry a virtual arsenal of cyber gear. Other beholders consider these cyberneticists to be the worst of all abominations, since they have chosen their deformity.

Beholder genetic makeup is prone to mutation. The statistics presented in the sidebar may vary drastically among individual beholders. Different strains of the beholder race may vary not only in appearance, but in the powers possessed by their various eyes and in other abilities.

TABLE 11: BEHOLDER HIT LOCATION

ROLL	LOCATION	ARMOR	DURABILITY
1–15	Body	d6+3 (LI), d4+2 (HI), d6 (En)	10/10/5/5
16–17	Central Eye	d6–2 (LI), d4–2 (HI), d6–4 (En)	5/5/2/2
18–19	Eyestalk	d6+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4–1 (En)	4/4/—/—
20	One smaller eye	d6–2 (LI), d4–2 (HI), d6–4 (En)	

James Wyatt designed his first ALTERNITY campaign (before the game was released!) around the idea of Earth being assimilated into an illithid empire.

by Jeff "Zippy" Quick

MARVEL SUPER HEROES ADVENTURE GAME

Spider-Man's Alien Costume

5X	Strength
14X	Agility
1X	Intellect
4X	Willpower
1/+1	Edge
3(17)/+1	Hand Size

Note: The number to the right of the slash for Edge and Hand Size indicates the bonus a hero receives for being bonded with the alien symbiont.

Skills

None

Powers

Ability Boost (as equipment) +5
Dual Boost: Strength, Agility
Body Armor +2
Life Support 15
Shapeshifting 5
Size Alteration, Plasticity
Web Slinging 14

Calling: Vengeance
Hindrances: Fatally Vulnerable (sonics)
Personality: The symbiont has little apparent personality, tending to absorb a heightened version of its host's personality. However, it does seem to maintain a love/hate relationship with Peter Parker—mostly hate, since it feels spurned and has bonded with vendetta-prone Eddie Brock.

History

Spider-Man encountered a strange alien "costume" during his tour of duty in the Secret Wars. Its true place of origin remains unknown, but it probably came from one of the dozens of planets the Beyonder pulled together to form his Battleworld. In one of the alien buildings, Thor and Hulk discovered a costume-making machine. Spidey's costume was torn and dirty, so he touched a little black blob in a machine, assuming it came from the costume dispenser.

The blob leapt onto Spider-Man's body, creating a new black-and-white costume for him. In addition to changing its appearance into whatever clothes Peter Parker wanted, the costume made its own webbing. This worked well until, back on Earth, Peter learned that the costume was actually a parasitic symbiont, leeching vitality from his body. After a couple of tries, he finally removed it in a painful ordeal involving the deafening sounds of church bells.

The Fantastic Four held the symbiont until it was freed in an unrelated attack by Doctor Doom. On the loose, the symbiont sought Spider-Man. Instead, it came across Eddie Brock, a disgraced reporter who hated Peter Parker for exposing his journalistic fraud. The costume bonded with him, creating Spider-Man's deadliest enemy: Venom. Venom displayed similar powers to Spider-Man's but also some radically different ones, such as claws, a gaping maw, and the ability to block Spider-Man's spider sense. Brock and the symbiont were separated several times, but they always managed to find each other again.

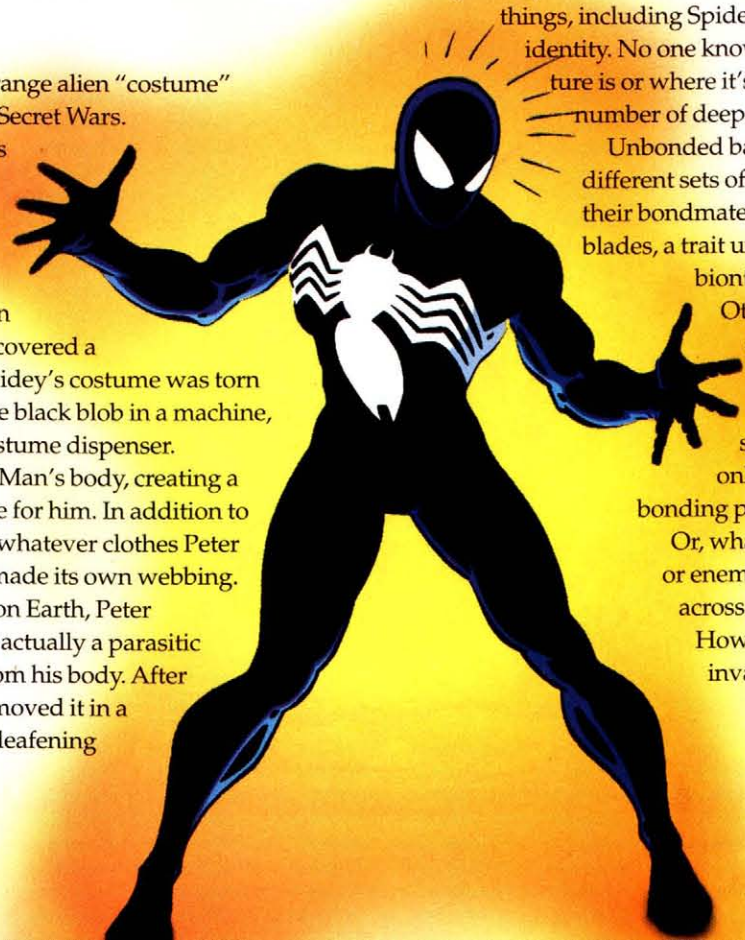
When the two rejoined on one occasion, the symbiont mysteriously "reproduced," leaving a symbiont behind to bond with serial killer Cletus Kasady. This combo took the name Carnage and raged across New York, killing hundreds of people. Only the combined efforts of Venom and Spider-Man brought down this terror. The original symbiont lives with Brock today.

Narrator Notes

Though the symbiont doesn't talk, it probably knows lots of things, including Spider-Man's secret identity. No one knows exactly how old the creature is or where it's from. It could carry any number of deep-space secrets.

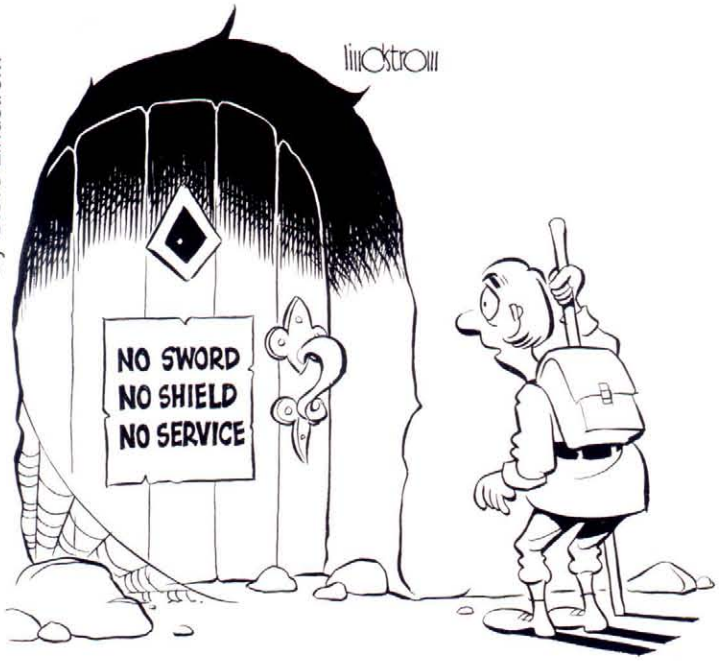
Unbonded baby costumes seem to create different sets of powers depending on who their bondmates are. Carnage sprouted sharp blades, a trait unseen in either of the symbiont's previous incarnations. Other versions of the symbiont could develop psionic powers, extra limbs, elongation, or even weirder abilities. The symbionts might be limited only by the psyches of their bonding partners!

Or, what if the symbiont has family or enemies? What if they traveled across the light-years to find it? How will heroes respond to an invasion force of symbionts?



MARVEL COMICS

Dragon Mirth™



By Steve Lindstrom

By Aaron Williams

"Whoops! Sorry, wrong tower."

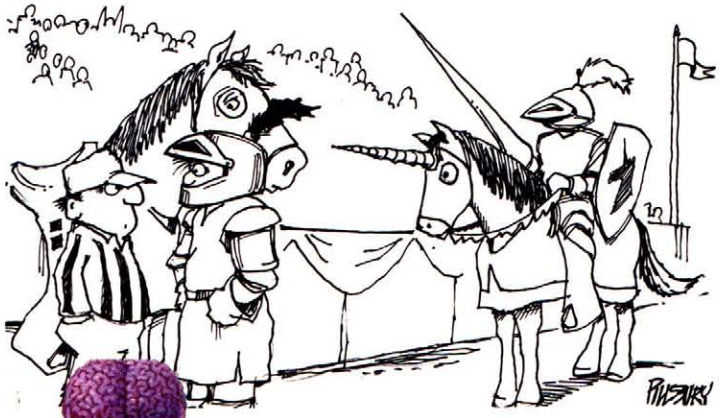
By Joe Pillsbury

The Unspeakable Oaf by John Kovalic

MIND BLAST

There is a magical item in the *DUNGEON MASTER*® GUIDE that can be made entirely from the letters in the word DE-BLOCKS. You can use those letters any number of times. What's the item? (hint: Only wizards may use it.)

You can find the solution to this *MIND BLAST* on page 87



http://members.aol.com/thinkloud/

By Joe Pillsbury

MIND FLAYERS

no. 3

by Mike Selinker

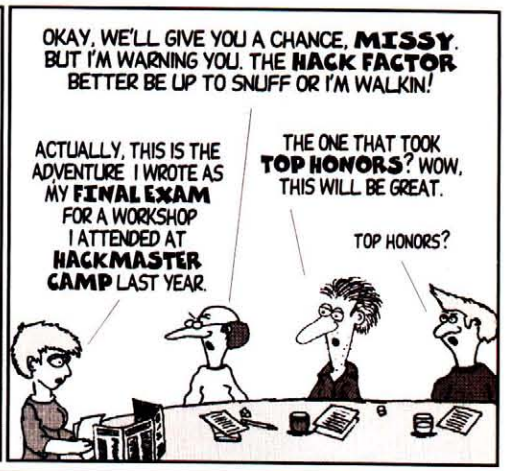
Each of the MONSTROUS MANUAL monsters below is broken into two words, one outside the other. For example, SHADOW might have a clue for SHOW on the outside and AD on the inside. The shaded letters show the positions of the

	EXTERIOR	INTERIOR
1	Nemesis	That woman
2	Use mouthwash	Yiddish "Oh my!"
3	Including	Egyptian sun god
4	Speaking crazily	All tied up
5	Give up	Oakland baseball team
6	Halfling's missile weapon	Common conjunction
7	Not major	A Greek letter
8	Coconut cream, for one	Another Greek letter
9	Quite a few	Scarlett's mansion
10	French cheese	Possess
11	"Darn!"	Missing
12	More brash	Ho-hum statement
13	Radiant	Mantra syllable
14	Drenched	Singer McEntire
15	Greater in amount	Prank
16	Smoothing tool	Eastern priest

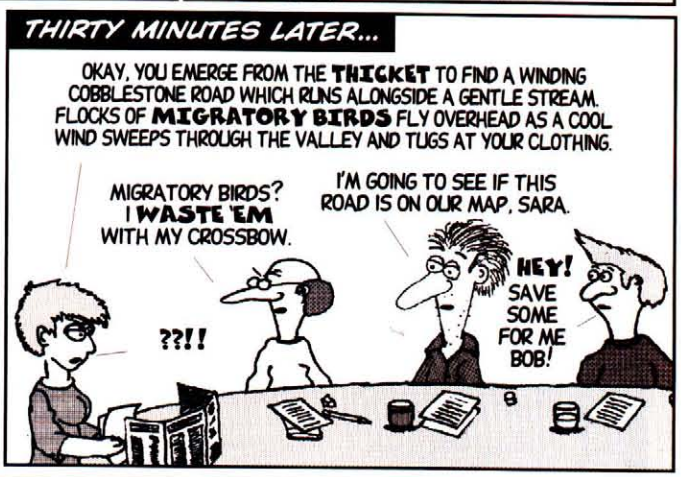
Knights of the Dinner Table

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

DAMMIT, B.A.! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GAVE UP THE SHIELDS TO SARA. YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I LOOK FORWARD TO MY WEEKLY BOUTS OF HACK-N-SLASHIN'.
IS EVERYONE READY TO START?
IT'S JUST ONE NIGHT, BOB. SHE SAID SHE HAD SOMETHING SPECIAL PLANNED.
THIS SHOULD BE REAL INTERESTING. GET READY FOR YAWNSVILLE EVERYBODY.
C'MON, GUYS. GIVE HER A CHANCE.


OKAY, WE'LL GIVE YOU A CHANCE, MISSY. BUT I'M WARNING YOU. THE HACK FACTOR BETTER BE UP TO SNUFF OR I'M WALKIN!
ACTUALLY, THIS IS THE ADVENTURE I WROTE AS MY FINAL EXAM FOR A WORKSHOP I ATTENDED AT HACKMASTER CAMP LAST YEAR.
THE ONE THAT TOOK TOP HONORS? WOW, THIS WILL BE GREAT.
TOP HONORS?

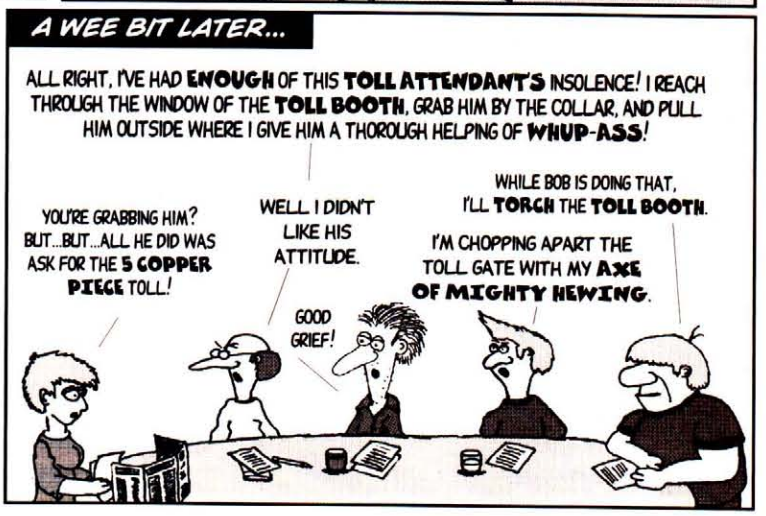
WE WERE INSTRUCTED TO DESIGN AN ADVENTURE THAT WOULD CHALLENGE THE PLAYERS AS WELL AS THE GM. I'M TELLIN' YA; EXPEDITION TO CASTLE LONELY IS NO CAKE WALK!
CHALLENGING? WELL WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO? BRING IT ON!
CASTLE LONELY? THERE'S A RED FLAG FOR YA! IF WE RUN INTO FABIO, HE'S TOAST!
LET'S GO!
GOOD LUCK, SARA!

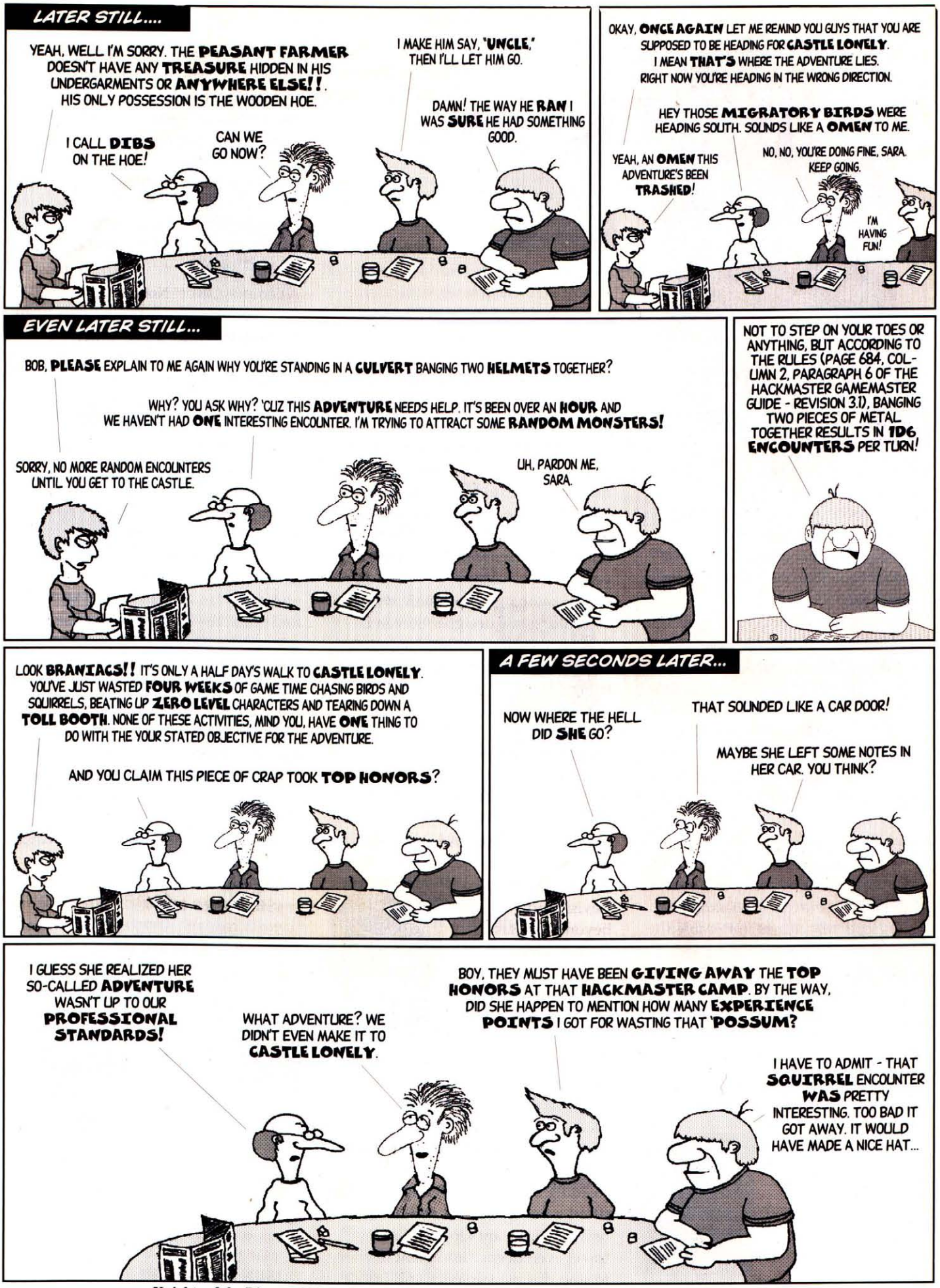

THIRTY MINUTES LATER...
OKAY, YOU EMERGE FROM THE THICKET TO FIND A WINDING COBBLESTONE ROAD WHICH RUNS ALONGSIDE A GENTLE STREAM. FLOCKS OF MIGRATORY BIRDS FLY OVERHEAD AS A COOL WIND SWEEPS THROUGH THE VALLEY AND TUGS AT YOUR CLOTHING.
MIGRATORY BIRDS? I WASTE 'EM WITH MY CROSSBOW.
I'M GOING TO SEE IF THIS ROAD IS ON OUR MAP, SARA.
??!!
HEY! SAVE SOME FOR ME BOB!

BOB, THERE'S NO SENSE IN FIRING AT THE BIRDS. THEY'RE INCONSEQUENTIAL! I'M MERELY TRYING TO CREATE SOME AMBIANCE FOR THE ADVENTURE.
INCONSEQUENTIAL? THEN WHY THE HELL DID YOU MENTION THEM? DON'T BE WASTIN' MY TIME LIKE THAT.
CAN I DRINK FROM THE STREAM OR IS THAT INCONSEQUENTIAL, TOO?
BOB, YOU'RE BEING DISRUPTIVE. STOP IT BEFORE I'M FORCED TO HURT YOU.
IGNORE HIM, SARA.
HEY, LET THE LADY RUN HER GAME.

LOOK, THE LADY PROMISED US A CHALLENGING ADVENTURE. SO FAR ALL WE'VE DONE IS TAKE A STROLL THRU THE WOODS. WHAT'S NEXT, PICKING WILD FLOWERS?
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU GUYS INSISTED ON CHASING THAT RANDOM SQUIRREL INTO THE WOODS.
CAN WE JUST STICK TO THE PLOT LINE? WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HEADING FOR CASTLE LONELY!
HEY, THAT SQUIRREL WAS WORTH 4 E.P.'S - EASY!

WELL THOSE 4 E.P.'S COST US TWO WEEKS OF GAME TIME. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE AT THE CASTLE SIX DAYS AGO. WE'LL BE LUCKY IF LORD TARRINGTON HASN'T HIRED SOMEONE ELSE FOR THE JOB.
I'M TELLIN' YOU, THERE WAS SOMETHING PECULIAR ABOUT THAT SQUIRREL. I THINK SHE BACK-TRACKED ON ME.
YEAH, THAT WAS ONE CLEVER BEAST!


A WEE BIT LATER...
ALL RIGHT, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS TOLL ATTENDANT'S INSOLENCE! I REACH THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE TOLL BOOTH, GRAB HIM BY THE COLLAR, AND PULL HIM OUTSIDE WHERE I GIVE HIM A THOROUGH HELPING OF WHUP-ASS!
YOU'RE GRABBING HIM? BUT...BUT...ALL HE DID WAS ASK FOR THE 5 COPPER PIECE TOLL!
WELL I DIDN'T LIKE HIS ATTITUDE.
WHILE BOB IS DOING THAT, I'LL TORCH THE TOLL BOOTH.
I'M CHOPPING APART THE TOLL GATE WITH MY AXE OF MIGHTY HEWING.
GOOD GRIEF!


LATER STILL....
YEAH, WELL I'M SORRY. THE PEASANT FARMER DOESN'T HAVE ANY TREASURE HIDDEN IN HIS UNDERGARMENTS OR ANYWHERE ELSE!!. HIS ONLY POSSESSION IS THE WOODEN HOE.
I CALL DIBS ON THE HOE!
CAN WE GO NOW?
I MAKE HIM SAY, "UNCLE," THEN I'LL LET HIM GO.
DAMN! THE WAY HE RAN I WAS SURE HE HAD SOMETHING GOOD.
OKAY, ONCE AGAIN LET ME REMIND YOU GUYS THAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE HEADING FOR CASTLE LONELY. I MEAN THAT'S WHERE THE ADVENTURE LIES. RIGHT NOW YOU'RE HEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.
HEY THOSE MIGRATORY BIRDS WERE HEADING SOUTH. SOUNDS LIKE A OMEN TO ME.
YEAH, AN OMEN THIS ADVENTURE'S BEEN TRASHED!
NO, NO, YOU'RE DOING FINE, SARA. KEEP GOING.
I'M HAVING FUN!
EVEN LATER STILL...
BOB, PLEASE EXPLAIN TO ME AGAIN WHY YOU'RE STANDING IN A CULVERT BANGING TWO HELMETS TOGETHER?
WHY? YOU ASK WHY? 'CUZ THIS ADVENTURE NEEDS HELP. IT'S BEEN OVER AN HOUR AND WE HAVEN'T HAD ONE INTERESTING ENCOUNTER. I'M TRYING TO ATTRACT SOME RANDOM MONSTERS!
SORRY, NO MORE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS UNTIL YOU GET TO THE CASTLE.
UH, PARDON ME, SARA.
NOT TO STEP ON YOUR TOES OR ANYTHING, BUT ACCORDING TO THE RULES (PAGE 684, COLUMN 2, PARAGRAPH 6 OF THE HACKMASTER GAMEMASTER GUIDE - REVISION 3.1), BANGING TWO PIECES OF METAL TOGETHER RESULTS IN 1D6 ENCOUNTERS PER TURN!
LOOK BRANIACS!! IT'S ONLY A HALF DAY'S WALK TO CASTLE LONELY. YOU'VE JUST WASTED FOUR WEEKS OF GAME TIME CHASING BIRDS AND SQUIRRELS, BEATING UP ZERO LEVEL CHARACTERS AND TEARING DOWN A TOLL BOOTH. NONE OF THESE ACTIVITIES, MIND YOU, HAVE ONE THING TO DO WITH THE YOUR STATED OBJECTIVE FOR THE ADVENTURE.
AND YOU CLAIM THIS PIECE OF CRAP TOOK TOP HONORS?
A FEW SECONDS LATER...
NOW WHERE THE HELL DID SHE GO?
THAT SOUNDED LIKE A CAR DOOR!
MAYBE SHE LEFT SOME NOTES IN HER CAR. YOU THINK?
I GUESS SHE REALIZED HER SO-CALLED ADVENTURE WASN'T UP TO OUR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS!
WHAT ADVENTURE? WE DIDN'T EVEN MAKE IT TO CASTLE LONELY.
BOY, THEY MUST HAVE BEEN GIVING AWAY THE TOP HONORS AT THAT HACKMASTER CAMP. BY THE WAY, DID SHE HAPPEN TO MENTION HOW MANY EXPERIENCE POINTS I GOT FOR WASTING THAT 'POSSUM?
I HAVE TO ADMIT - THAT SQUIRREL ENCOUNTER WAS PRETTY INTERESTING. TOO BAD IT GOT AWAY. IT WOULD HAVE MADE A NICE HAT...

Knights of the Dinner Table™ © kenzerCo 1999 • Internet: http://members.aol.com/relkin/kenzerco.html
Send story ideas to jollyrb@aol.com or KODT, 1003 Monroe Pike, Marion, IN 46953

Previews

AUGUST

Silver Anniversary Collector's Edition

An AD&D® Accessory

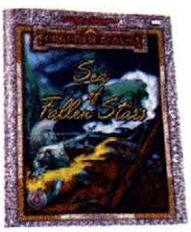
Celebrate the last twenty-five years of D&D® history with the *Silver Anniversary Collector's Edition*. This collector's box highlights the last quarter-century of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® products. Inside you'll find:

- Facsimiles of the original modules featured in TSR's Silver Anniversary releases: B2 (*Keep on the Borderlands*), G1 (*Steading of the Hill Giant Chief*), G2 (*The Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl*), G3 (*Hall of the Fire Giant King*), I6 (*Ravenloft*), S2 (*White Plume Mountain*), and the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rulebook
- The 32-page *History of TSR* book—which includes a retrospective essay by Gary Gygax.
- L3 *Deep Dwarven Delve*—a recently recovered, never-before-released 1st-Edition adventure by Len Lakofka.
- A specially created, frameable art print painted by Jeff Easley.

$59.95
TSR 11549
ISBN 0-7869-1549-8

Sea of Fallen Stars

A FORGOTTEN REALMS® Accessory
By Steven E. Schend



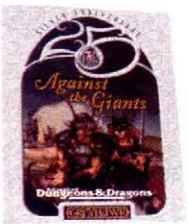
Sea of Fallen Stars allows heroes to explore the depths of this mysterious and uncharted region for the first time. In addition to detailing the cultures and societies that flourish beneath the waves, this product provides rules for taking a land-based FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign underwater. It also features campaign information on the undersea region, aquatic player character races, and many wonders that make this the hottest FORGOTTEN REALMS product this year.

This campaign expansion, written by senior game designer Steven E. Schend, complements and supports Mel Odom's Threat from the Sea novel trilogy.

$24.95/$36.95 CAN
TSR 11393
ISBN 0-7869-1393-2

Against the Giants: The Liberation of Geoff

A GREYHAWK® Silver Anniversary Adventure
By Sean Reynolds



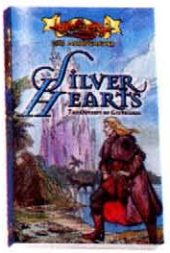
Revisit and go beyond the classic E. Gary Gygax adventure *Against the Giants* in this Silver Anniversary edition of the AD&D game classic. Marauding giants have plagued the human lands for years, but now only the land of Geoff remains in the grip of the giants. As in the classic series of adventures, player characters must storm the steading of a hill giant chief, attack the rift of a frost giant jarl, and invade the hall of a fire giant king. Then they travel even deeper into giant territory to stop this menace once and for all!

Another in a series of special Silver Anniversary products celebrating twenty-five years of TSR, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, and the AD&D game!

$17.95/$26.95 CAN
TSR 11413
ISBN 0-7869-1413-0

Dragonlance Reader's Companion: The Odyssey of Gilthanas

A DRAGONLANCE® Novella and Sourcebook
By Douglas Niles, Steve Miller, and Stan!



This is the crossover DRAGONLANCE sourcebook that readers and game fans have been waiting for. Utilizing the talents of popular DRAGONLANCE author Douglas Niles and game fan favorites Steve Miller and Stan!, the *Reader's Companion* follows the tale of the elf prince Gilthanas as he searches for Silvara, his dragon love. Along the way, readers learn about the many Krynnish sites that are steeped in magic and legend. An excellent source of material for gaming enthusiasts, as well as exciting stories that shed new light on beloved characters and locations from the DRAGONLANCE saga.

$6.99/$8.95 CAN
TSR 11446
ISBN 0-7869-1446-7

Silverfall: Stories of the Seven Sisters

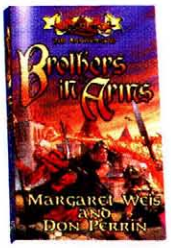
A FORGOTTEN REALMS Novel
By Ed Greenwood

Seven beautiful sisters, all touched by the hand of the goddess Mystra, are together in one book for the first time as they match wits and magical powers with a Realms-spanning conspiracy.

$14.99/$21.95 CAN
TSR 21365
ISBN 0-7869-1365-7

Brothers in Arms
The Raistlin Chronicles, Volume Two

A DRAGONLANCE Novel
By Margaret Weis and Don Perrin



In the months after the events of *The Soulforge*, Raistlin and Caramon join a mercenary army. The army's first assignment is to capture a city that holds a secret known only to the commander of the dragonarmies.

$6.99/$8.95 CAN
TSR 21429
ISBN 0-7869-1429-7

SEPTEMBER

The Wyrmskull Throne

A FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventure
By Steven E. Schend and Thomas M. Reid

This exciting adventure revolves around the ancient artifact, the Wyrmskull Throne. This epic employs the underwater adventuring rules found in *The Sea of Fallen Stars*. For character levels 4–7.

$12.95/$18.95 CAN
TSR 11405
ISBN 0-7869-1405-X

FORGOTTEN REALMS Interactive Atlas

An AD&D Electronic Media Utility
Programming by ProFantasy Ltd.

This CD-ROM features a complete interactive atlas of the entire planet of Abeir-Toril! All overland, city, and dungeon maps of the Realms, including maps never before published, are available to view and print. All maps are fully compatible with and editable in the *AD&D Core Rules CD-ROM 2.0* and *Campaign Cartographer 2*.

Price TBD
TSR 11451
ISBN 0-7869-1451-3

Murder in Drivespace

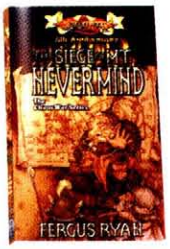
A STAR*DRIVE® Adventure
By Richard Dakan

Place a diplomatic meeting aboard a starship, then drop that ship into the dimensional void of drivespace. When an alien ambassador is murdered, it's a race against time to find the killer before the ship emerges from drivespace. This adventure blends mystery with science fiction for the STAR*DRIVE campaign or any ALTERNITY® setting. Includes details on a new alien species that could become humanity's most trusted ally or deadliest foe.

$13.95/$18.95 CAN
TSR 11407
ISBN 0-7869-1407-6

The Siege of Mt. Nevermind

The Chaos War Series
A DRAGONLANCE Novel
By Fergus Ryan

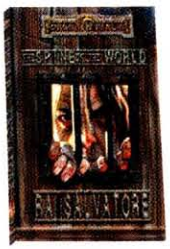


When agents of the Dark try to enlist the gnomes in the Chaos War, they do not reckon with an assortment of well-intentioned heroes, a brilliant (well, not *that* brilliant) gnome inventor, and the indomitable gnome spirit.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR 21381
ISBN 0-7869-1381-9

The Spine of the World

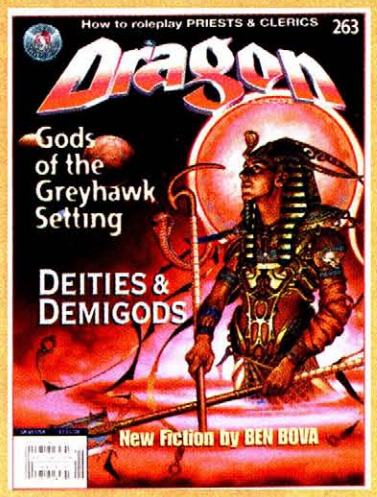
A FORGOTTEN REALMS Novel
By R.A. Salvatore



New York Times bestselling author R.A. Salvatore continues the tale of the fall of the once mighty barbarian Wulfgar. Featuring the popular journal entries of dark elf Drizzt Do'Urden, *The Spine of the World* is an epic story of adventure and redemption.

$23.99/$31.95 CAN
TSR 21418
ISBN 0-7869-1418-1

Coming Attractions



Cover by Michael Sutfin

Sword & Hearth

By Ian Malcomson

The companion piece to this year's popular "Dark Ages" article (in issue #257), here are the AD&D versions of the gods and specialty priests of the Anglo-Saxons.

Gods of Greyhawk

By Andy Miller

Explore the hidden corners of the pantheon of Oerth with the first in a three-part survey of the lesser gods of the Oeridians.

Heaven's Trump

By James Wyatt

Warriors of Heaven reveals everything about the celestial armies—except how to employ them on the Prime. Here's how.

The Western Wyrms

By Charlie Martin

With the re-release of the COUNCIL OF WYRMS™ setting, now's the time to add these new draconic characters to your campaign.

Plus "Bazaar of the Bizarre," "Arcane Lore," "Rogues Gallery," "Sage Advice," and more!

$4.95 U.S./$6.50 CAN
TSR Product No. 082263

Coming Attractions

Cover by Dimitri Patelis

Mertylmane's Road

by Jason Poole & Craig Zipse

Escort a trade caravan across the icy wastes of Northern Kaloria. An AD&D® adventure for levels 5–7.

The House on the Edge of Midnight

by Raymond E. Dyer

Trapped on an island of perpetual night, your only hope is to end a lingering family curse. An AD&D RAVENLOFT® adventure for levels 4–6.

Earth Tones

by Craig Shackleton

The citizens of Blue Rock shudder as vile creatures erupt from the earth. An AD&D adventure for levels 7–9.

A Day at the Market

by Kevin Carter

Wondrous magic spills into the streets of Riverspire. An AD&D Side Trek adventure for levels 2–4.

Crusader

by Peter Lloyd-Lee

A renowned paladin needs your help to retrieve his holy sword. An AD&D adventure for levels 3–6.

$4.95 U.S./$6.50 CAN.
TSR Product No. 82076

Council of Wyrms

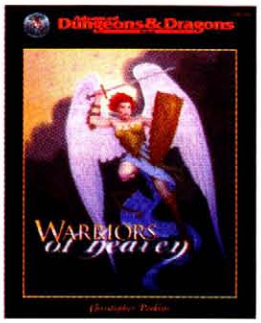
An AD&D Accessory
By Bill Slavicsek

This revised and expanded edition of one of the AD&D game's hottest selling products, *Council of Wyrms* takes the AD&D game in an entirely new direction. It includes rules for playing dragons, new character types like kindred, half-dragons, and dragon slayers, campaign background material, and a series of adventures designed to challenge even the greatest of dragons!

$26.95/$39.95 CAN
TSR 11383
ISBN 0-7869-1383-5

Warriors of Heaven

An AD&D Accessory
By Christopher Perkins



Nothing makes a demon cringe more than the flicker of a deva's sword, the glare of an archon, or the wrath of a guardinal. Players can now create powerful beings devoted to the destruction of evil. DMs can learn the true secrets of the Upper Planes and create challenging adventures for high-powered heroes. This 96-page book details the politics of the celestials, describes key sites in the Upper Planes, and provides countless new adventure hooks suitable for any AD&D campaign.

$18.95/$27.85 CAN
TSR 11361
ISBN 0-7869-1361-4

Incident at Exile

By William W. Connors
An ALTERNITY® Fast-Play Accessory

Looking to take family and friends into the future of roleplaying? This introduction shows Gamemasters the basics of refereeing the ALTERNITY game. Players can explore the planet known as Exile to uncover the truth as to what's happening at this deep space mining outpost—and enter the brave new world of the premiere science fiction game.

$4.95/$6.95 CAN
TSR 11514
ISBN 0-7869-1514-5

OCTOBER

Priest's Spell Compendium, Volume 2

An AD&D® Accessory
Edited by Jon Pickens

The monumental task of collecting every official priest spell for the AD&D game continues with the second volume of the *Priest's Spell Compendium*. All spells have been updated so that players and DMs can use them in any AD&D game. This is the official reference book and definitive source for priest spells.

$24.95/$36.95 CAN
TSR 11421
ISBN 0-7869-1421-1

Carnival

A RAVENLOFT® Accessory
By John Mangrum and Steve Miller

The mysterious Carnival rolls into town, where it astounds, entertains, and occasionally repulses before disappearing again. Carnival can appear in any AD&D campaign, and it includes the freakish inhabitants of the traveling show, adventure hooks, and rules for turning PCs into terrifying freaks should they linger too long among the tents and wagons.

$13.95/ $20.95 CAN
TSR 11382
ISBN 0-7869-1382-7

Introduction to the ALTERNITY Adventure Game

By William W. Connors and Sean Reynolds

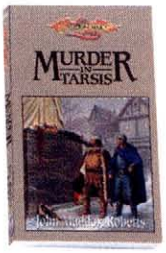
Open an entire galaxy of gaming with the ALTERNITY science fiction game. This set welcomes new players into an exciting science fiction universe where they control the

action! Each game comes complete with everything needed to play, including an adventure book full of exciting scenarios, pregenerated heroes, and dice. Use this boxed set as an entry point into the whole family of ALTERNITY products, or continue with the ALTERNITY Fast-Play adventure, *Incident at Exile.*

$9.99/$14.99 CAN
TSR 11510
ISBN 0-7869-1510-2

Murder in Tarsis

A DRAGONLANCE Novel
By John Maddox Roberts

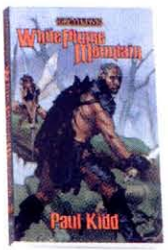


Who killed Ambassador Bloodarrow? Time is running out for an unlikely trio of detectives. The heroes know that failing to solve the mystery means death. This tangled plot unfolds in Tarsis, the once beautiful seaport city now landlocked by the devastating Cataclysm.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR 21587
ISBN 0-7869-1587-0

White Plume Mountain

A GREYHAWK Novel
By Paul Kidd

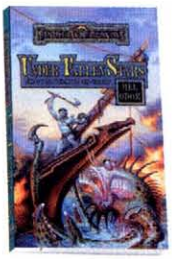


A hero, a pixie, and a sentient hell hound pelt with an obsessive case of pyromania battle the agents of the evil Iuz.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR21424
ISBN : 0-7869-1424-6

Under Fallen Stars

The Threat From the Sea, Book II
A FORGOTTEN REALMS Novel
By Mel Odom



As the undersea forces threatening Faerûn gather strength, the heroes of *Rising Tide* prepare their counterattack.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR 21378
ISBN : 0-7869-1378-9

All release dates are subject to change without notice.

TSR NEWS

GEN CON Game Fair Events

New Pool of Radiance

SSI will publish a new *Pool of Radiance* title, continuing the successful AD&D® game computer line originally created in 1988. These epic titles soon came to be known as the "Gold Box Games," due to their distinctive gold packaging.

"The Gold Box Games were definitely a high-water mark for SSI and fans of fantasy gaming," says Chuck Kroegel, general manager of Mindscape Entertainment. "With this new *Pool of Radiance* product, we intend to extend the heritage of the Gold Box Games to both long-time DUNGEONS & DRAGONS players as well as newcomers to the fantasy roleplaying genre."

This new *Pool of Radiance* game is set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting. Solo players control a party of six adventurers in quests involving the discovery of a new Pool of Radiance in the ancient elven ruins of Myth Drannor. Multiplayer support is also available for up to six players.

Dungeons & Diablo

Wizards of the Coast has signed a deal with Blizzard Entertainment to develop paper-based roleplaying games for Blizzard's highly successful computer games *Diablo* and *StarCraft*.

TSR will kick off the *Diablo* adventure game line by developing a D&D®/*Diablo* Fast-Play game to be included with Blizzard Entertainment's *Diablo* computer game. Other *Diablo* products will include a D&D/*Diablo* Adventure Game boxed set to be released later this year, as well as a separate 128-page adventure module with an eight-page map book, for next year.

Similar products will be produced for *StarCraft*, Blizzard's biggest computer game, with more than 1.7 million copies sold worldwide. The *StarCraft* universe will be developed into a *StarCraft* Adventure Game boxed set using TSR's ALTERNITY® Science Fiction Roleplaying Game setting. A separate adventure module is also planned

Super Heroes are Among us!

This year, five companies join forces to celebrate all that makes super heroism fun on Fantastic Friday at this year's GEN CON Game Fair! Games, panels, and special events will take place throughout the Game Fair, but they take center stage on Friday with celebrities from Marvel and DC Comics, as well as Lou "The Incredible Hulk" Ferrigno and Kevin "Voice of Batman" Conroy.

Dungeon Delve

The earth holds many perils—some known, some secret, some merely hungry, and some evil. The wise speak in whispers of the dreadful Dungeon Delve, wherein unmentionable beasts cavort, awful rites pay homage to a flaming fiend from Hell itself, and desperate adventurers yearn for a sun they might never see again.

The Dungeon Delve, the Game Fair's largest AD&D dungeon event, begins Thursday and ends Sunday. Stop by Wizards of the Coast's pavilion anytime—or many times—for an hour of roleplaying in this ongoing adventure. Characters who emerge alive post the results of their delve on the growing map created by other adventuring parties. Surviving characters have the opportunity to return to the dungeon delve for more adventures. Some players will advance to special missions, satellite dungeons completely constructed with Dwarven Forge dungeon walls and tiles. Based on the popularity of last year's Dungeon Delve, this year's event promises to be a convention highlight.

Missing in Action

If you submitted Bruno "Orckiller" Colligan in the Design-a-1st-Level-Character contest (from issue #259), please call, write, or email us with your identity. We like Bruno, but we don't know who you are!

STEVEN SCHEND

From the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign to STAR*DRIVE® setting, **Steven Schend still believes** in a sense of wonder.

by Stephen Kenson

Ask game author and designer Steven Schend what he considers the most important aspect of a game and he replies, "What I'm always looking for is that sense of wonder in a game, something that really makes me go 'wow!'"

It was that sense of wonder that brought Steve to roleplaying games and eventually led him to a career in the RPG industry. Schend has provided plenty of wonderful things for players, having worked on TSR's original *MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Roleplaying Game* as well as the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, including the recent *Sea of Fallen Stars* book.

Born in 1967 in Madison, Wisconsin, Schend grew up in Kenosha, a short distance from Lake Geneva. He first started gaming in high school, attending college in nearby Madison, and graduating with a degree in English in 1989. Despite being in TSR's backyard the whole time, Schend never attended the GEN CON® Game Fair until after he began working for TSR in early 1990.

"I really wish I could explain that," Schend says with a laugh, "but that's just how it worked out."

Since signing on with TSR as a Games Department editor, Schend has been a regular GEN CON attendee. He managed the Super-Hero Sunday programming for GEN CON a few years ago. He also managed the original MARVEL SUPER HEROES RPG line. "I started working on Marvel pretty much the day I walked in the door," he says.

"I'm quite proud of Scott Davis' and my work on the *Lands of Dr. Doom* supplement, simply for untangling thirty years of Doctor Doom's chronology. I'm fond of *Blood Wars*, TSR's second entry into the CCG craze, from a technical and strategic design sense. Most of all, I'm proud of my body of work within the Realms. So much of it ties together that it's hard to pick favorites. If I had to, I'd choose the upcoming *Sea of Fallen Stars* accessory as the most original world-building I've ever done."

Along with Julia Martin, Schend was one of the continuity monitors for the Realms. He also served as the assistant manager of the Realms product group for three years before returning to full-time design work last year.

"I've finished my part of a book on secret societies in the Realms. It takes a good, hard look at the many groups that skulk in the shadows, providing many insidious menaces for gamers to defeat in their own campaigns."

Schend now works on the ALTERNITY® game line and the STAR*DRIVE setting. "There are exciting things coming up for the STAR*DRIVE campaign, and I'm thrilled to be on the team," he says. "It's a stretch after all the fantasy work I've done, but I'm looking forward to what's ahead for these worlds of the future."

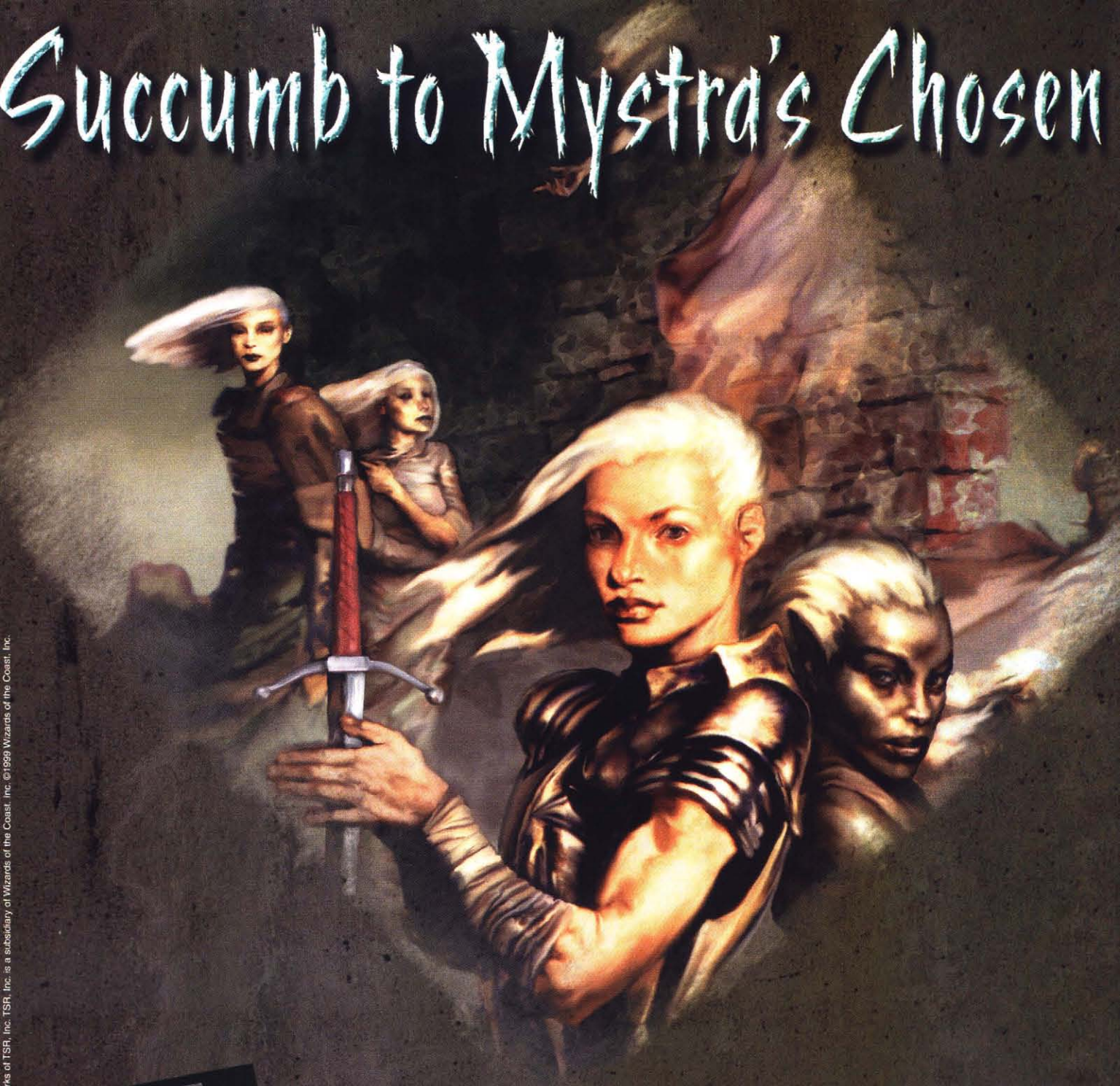
What's ahead for Schend's work in the STAR*DRIVE setting? "I'll be putting in stories from a personal angle rather than dealing just with the stellar nations and the other major powers. You can't deal with things on a huge scale all the time. You have to bring it down to a personal level for it to really matter. I've done some huge things in the Realms, like the *Sea of Fallen Stars* book, but there are over a hundred new characters in there. The setting doesn't do you any good unless there are characters that live within the stories."

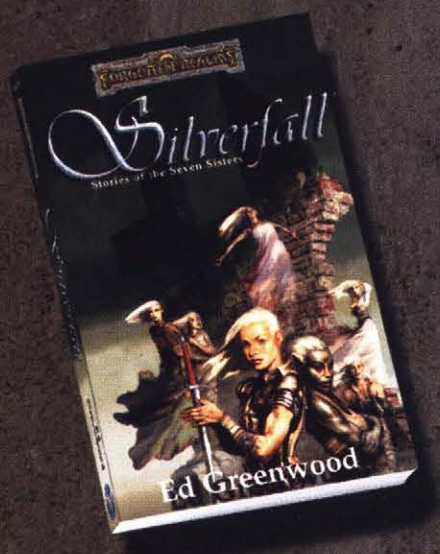
That personal, character-based level is what drives games for Schend. "I always look at characters because sometimes we forget that, just because they don't look like us doesn't mean they don't have the same motivations. Elves or aliens can be just as 'human' as the best and worst of us, and that can tell us something about ourselves."

To Schend it's the little things that make a game world great. The details of characters and places all contribute to the flavor that helps bring the world to life and make it a real place for the players who adventure there. "It's those little touches you weren't expecting," he says. "I like things that bring back the awe-inspiring feel I expect from a fantasy world."

Because of this desire to recapture a sense of wonder, Schend has a difficult time picking out his favorite works. "I try and put something special into everything I do," he says. "I don't really have a particular favorite. I look at them all as stepping stones toward my becoming a better writer. I hope that each thing I write is better than the last."

Succumb to Mystra's Chosen





The Seven Sisters, each kissed by the Goddess of Magic's silver fire, are united for the first time in *Silverfall*. Strange doings are afoot in Scornubel—disappearances, drow blood on alley walls, dark forewarnings of a sinister threat.

The evil that threatens Faerûn is immense, and all Seven Sisters must enter the fray in these seven linked novellas from the creator of the **Forgotten Realms** Ed Greenwood.

Silverfall: Stories of the Seven Sisters
Ed Greewood
Available August 1999

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Questions? (800) 324-6496
or visit <www.tsr.com>

SILVER ANNIVERSARY TSR

TSR, **Forgotten Realms**, and the TSR and **Forgotten Realms** logos are registered trademarks of TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THERE WERE NO MORE HEROES.

THINK AGAIN.

HEROES III
OF MIGHT AND MAGIC™

ARMAGEDDON'S BLADE™

AN EXPANSION PACK OF EPIC PROPORTIONS.

THE NEW EXPANSION PACK FEATURES...

- MORE THAN 20 NEW HEROES
- SIX NEW CHALLENGING CAMPAIGNS
- NEW MYSTICAL WORLD - THE ELEMENTAL CONFLUX
- MORE HERO CLASSES
- MORE MONSTERS
- MORE DRAGONS
- NEW ADVANCED CAMPAIGN & MAP EDITOR
- NEW RANDOM MAP GENERATOR
- UNLIMITED GAMEPLAY
- EXTENSIVE CUSTOMIZATION
- AND LAN, MODEM OR INTERNET PLAY

NEW WORLD COMPUTING

3DO™

www.mightandmagic.com

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD-ROM

© 1999 The 3DO Company. All Rights Reserved. Heroes of Might and Magic, Armageddon's Blade, New World Computing, 3DO, and their respective logos, are trademarks and/or service marks of The 3DO Company in the U.S. and other countries. All other trademarks belong to their respective owners. New World Computing is a division of The 3DO Company.